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INDIAN TRAPPERS COMING IN WITH FURS

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Tales of the Explorers of Canada

William Stewart

BY

W. S. WALLACE

WITH FRONTISPIECE IN COLOUR
AND MAPS

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PREFACE

SINCE the readers for whom this little book is primarily intended are seldom addicted to the unhappy practice of reading prefaces, and since book-reviewers and public librarians and school-teachers and rich uncles (all of whom, it is hoped, may look on the book with a kindly eye) sometimes are, it is perhaps fitting to explain here that the following pages are not intended to be a history of Canadian exploration. They are intended rather to set forth a series of stories illustrating the history of Canadian exploration, linked together by such brief comment as seems to be necessary. It is hoped that these stories will be found, by those most familiar with the subject, to be abreast of recent scholarship; but it should be understood that, though based in the main on primary rather than on secondary sources, they are in no sense contributions to the history of Canada. They are merely an attempt to

put into story form some of the achievements of the great pathfinders of the northern half of North America, and thus to invest these achievements with an interest which is perhaps lacking in historical narratives of the traditional type.

It is also fitting that acknowledgment should be made here of the debt the author owes to Mr. H. H. Langton, Librarian of the University of Toronto, for his kindness in reading the proofs of the following pages, and for a number of helpful criticisms and suggestions.

W. S. W.

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INTRODUCTORY

JUST when the shores of Canada first discovered themselves to the eyes of white men, it is impossible to tell with certainty. For all we know, European sailing vessels may have blundered on America before the birth of Christ. There has always been a good deal of blowing and drifting on the high seas of which the world has known nothing. In our own time, Japanese junks have been blown ashore on the coasts of Oregon and California; ships sailing down the west coast of Africa have found themselves off the shores of Brazil; and it would not be surprising if, over two thousand years ago, Phœnician vessels from Tyre and Sidon or Carthage had been driven across the Atlantic from the Pillars of Hercules to America. Indeed, the great Greek philosopher Plato, who lived four hundred years before Christ, actually tells us of mariners who, before his time, had visited an island far out in the Western Sea to which they gave the name Atlantis; and there are those who have conjectured that this mythical island, to which the Atlantic Ocean owes its name, was none other than the continent of America. But Plato says that he heard the story of Atlantis 'from an Egyptian priest,' which was perhaps his way of saying that in his opinion it was a fairy tale; and in any case such legendary rumours as this cannot be taken seriously by the modern his-

torian. It is within the range of possibility that the ancients may have reached America ; but whether they actually did so or not, we do not know.

The first European visitors to Canada of whom we have any authentic record are the Northmen. These bold, fair-haired sons of Scandinavia were among the most wonderful of the races of mediaeval Europe. Coming from their fastnesses in the fjords of Norway and Denmark, they swept down on southern Europe and for centuries terrorised the people of Scotland, Ireland, England, and France. They ravaged England in the time of Alfred the Great, and later conquered it under Cnut ; they colonised parts of Ireland and Scotland ; they wrested from the King of France the fair province of Normandy, which is named after them ; and their descendants actually set up a Norman kingdom in the Two Sicilies. Among their other achievements was the colonisation in the ninth century of the island of Iceland, where their descendants still live. From Iceland they found their way in the tenth century to Greenland. Here they founded a colony, of which the ruins are still seen standing, gaunt and mysterious, on that desolate coast ; and from Greenland they penetrated, just before the year 1000, to the north-west coast of North America.

Our account of the Norse visits to America is to be found in two or three of the old Icelandic sagas. These historical tales were put in writing long after the events which they purport to describe ; and they differ greatly in their details. Indeed, so great an authority as the Norwegian

explorer Nansen has expressed the opinion that they are almost wholly mythical and untrustworthy. He will not admit that they prove more than the mere fact that the Northmen visited the New World. Other scholars, however, have placed more reliance in the details of the story contained in the sagas ; and perhaps the outlines of the story have a basis in fact. At any rate, what the sagas tell us is so strange and romantic that it may not be amiss to set down here a version of their story for what it may be worth.

THE LEGEND OF LEIF THE LUCKY

TOWARD the end of the tenth century—in the days when Ethelred the Unready was sitting on the throne of England—there lived in Iceland a most turbulent person named Eric the Red. He and his father had originally had to leave Norway on account of some murders they had committed ; and he himself had, on one occasion at least, been forced to change his place of residence in Iceland on account of yet other murders. Finally, about the year 984, his quarrelsome nature gave such offence to his neighbours that he was declared an outlaw at the meeting of the folk. This meant that any one might kill him with impunity ; and the

question now was where he should go to take refuge.

Shortly before this, an Icelandic viking named Gunnbiorn, the son of Ulf the Crow, had been driven by storms westward from Iceland, and had discovered Greenland. Eric the Red decided that he would go in search of this newly discovered country, and, if he could find it, make his home there. He took with him not only his family, but also a number of his friends : and he established in Greenland a Norse colony. It was he who gave to that bleak and barren country its attractive name, just as in modern times real estate agents have given to equally undesirable properties equally attractive names.

'People will be drawn hither,' he said, 'if the country has a good name.'

Eric the Red had a son named Leif the Lucky, who accompanied his father to Greenland. Leif is described in one of the sagas as 'a promising young man,' and in another as 'a man of great accomplishments.' He was called 'the Lucky' because on one occasion he rescued a shipful of Norwegians who had been shipwrecked on a reef, and because he made a small fortune out of the salvage of the derelict vessel. He seems, without doubt, to have been a most vigorous and enterprising sort of person ; and his life was full of all kinds of adventures. At a later date he made a voyage to the Hebrides,

Map to illustrate
the Discovery of America
by the Northmen.

Stanford's Geog. Estab. London.

off the coast of Scotland, where he fell in love with a lady of high rank, named Thorgunna, who in turn was so infatuated with him that she wished to accompany him on his travels. Thence he went to Norway, and spent a winter at the court of the King of Norway, Olaf Tryggvason. While here Leif was converted to Christianity (for up to this time most of the Northmen had been pagans); and when he returned to Greenland he took back with him a priest as missionary. That unrepentant old sinner, Eric the Red, would have nothing to do with the new-fangled religion; but Leif's mother and a number of others were converted and baptized, and thus Leif the Lucky deserves the credit of having introduced Christianity into Greenland.

But it is not these episodes in Leif's life with which we are here mainly concerned. The greatest and most amazing of all his adventures was his expedition to the coast of North America, on which, so far as we know, he was the first white man to set foot. Just how he came to make this expedition is a matter on which the sagas are in disagreement. According to one of them, he blundered on the shores of Labrador on his return to Greenland from his visit to the court of King Olaf of Norway; according to another, he made a deliberate voyage of discovery from Greenland to the south-west to explore the

possibilities of a land which had already been sighted by a viking named Bjarni Herjulfsson. Which of these accounts is correct, it is very difficult to decide. But the story of Bjarni Herjulfsson, as told in the *Saga of the Flat Island Book*, contains within it so many natural and life-like touches that one is loath to believe there is no truth in it.

The story runs that, in the summer of the year 985, Bjarni, who had for some time been roaming the high seas in his 'sea-dragon,' came home to Iceland to drink the Yule-tide ale with his father Herjulf. Herjulf was a farmer, but Bjarni seems to have been of a roving disposition. 'While still young,' says the saga, 'he had developed a passion for voyaging.' He had become a trader, and perhaps, if the truth were told, he may have done a little buccaneering into the bargain. He was, however, a dutiful son, and he made a practice of spending every second winter with his father. What was his astonishment, when he sailed into Eyrar harbour that summer day in 985, to find that his father had left Iceland. He had gone, so the neighbours told Bjarni, with Eric the Red to settle in Greenland.

Bjarni might well have hesitated before attempting to follow his father to the new colony. 'Our voyage,' he confessed to his shipmates, 'must be regarded as foolhardy, seeing that not one of us has ever been to the

Greenland Sea.' But if Bjarni did hesitate, it was only for a moment. He told his men that he always spent every second winter with his father, and that he was going to keep to his custom. They agreed to abide by his decision ; and so, after taking on supplies, Bjarni weighed anchor, and sailed westward ' until the land was hidden by the water.'

The truth is that, for those old Norse mariners, the sea had almost no terrors. In their beautiful long, open, deckless 'sea-dragons'—propelled only by a single bank of oars and a square of canvas, and guided only by a long oar for rudder—they went everywhere in all weathers. The mariner's compass had not yet been invented, and they had no guide but the stars. Yet as practical navigators they far outshone the sailors of five centuries later, and their ships were probably more seaworthy than the Spanish galleons of the time of Columbus.

Bjarni Herjulfsson was not behind his contemporaries in the science of seamanship, but on his voyage westward he fell in with bad luck. Not long after leaving Iceland he encountered foggy weather, and was compelled to sail on for many days by guesswork without seeing the sun or the stars. When at length the sun appeared, and Bjarni was able to get his bearings, he had drifted far out of his course ; and when he sighted land, he saw immediately that it was not the

land of which he was in search. The Icelanders had told him that in Greenland there were 'many great ice-mountains,' but as he sailed close to the shore he saw that the coast on which he had stumbled was low and wooded. Bjarni's men were anxious to land, but Bjarni, whose supplies were no doubt getting low, would not allow them to do so. Realising that he was too far south, he turned his prow northward; and after scudding for several days before a fair wind, he at last saw the ice-bound crags of Greenland loom up before him, and so in due course he reached his father's new home at Herjulfsness.

If, as we are assuming, Bjarni Herjulfsson actually made this voyage, the report which he and his men brought back to Greenland of the land which they had found to the south-west must have created something of a sensation in the little Norse colony. Certainly it must have made a deep impression on the mind of such a bold and enterprising person as Leif the Lucky. For the moment, however, the time was not propitious for organising exploring expeditions. The colony in Greenland had just been established. Houses had to be built; the few ships of the colonists had to be continually employed in trading and fishing; and the colony was too poor to indulge in the luxury of voyages of discovery. It was only after fifteen years had

elapsed that Leif the Lucky, who had just come back from the court of the King of Norway, and who had perhaps himself sighted the land which Bjarni had seen, decided to organise an exploring expedition. Possibly, too, he had in mind the possibility of securing timber. Greenland, despite its name, was a barren country, and the low wooded shores which Bjarni had described promised a supply of building material of which the Greenland settlers stood in great need.

Leif the Lucky bought Bjarni Herjulfsson's ship, and, having got together a crew of thirty-five men, set out from Greenland toward the south-west. The first land on which he came was bleak and barren. 'No grass grew there, and great glaciers were seen inland, while the coast between the glaciers and the sea looked like a large flat stone.' To this place Leif gave the name of Helluland, or Flat Stone Land. Next they came to a coast which was flat and covered with woods. 'There were extensive white sands wherever they went, and the beach was not steep.' To this place Leif gave the name of Markland, or Woodland. Last of all, they came, farther south, on a part of the country which pleased them so greatly that they decided to spend the winter there. They entered a deep inlet, the shores of which were heavily wooded, and here they proceeded to build for themselves log-houses.

To this neighbourhood Leif gave the name of Vinland or Wineland, because one of his men, a German named Tyrker, found here large quantities of what the Northmen called 'wine-berries.' Leif had followed the policy of sending out half his party exploring during the day, but had given orders that the exploring party should always be back by nightfall. One night it was found that Tyrker was missing. A search party was organised, and Tyrker was discovered not far away in a half-intoxicated condition. He had, it would seem, found great quantities of 'wine-berries' (which were perhaps a variety of grape), and had partaken of them too freely. The discovery of these 'wine-berries' made a great impression on the Northmen; and it was on this account that the land was called Wineland.

To identify these various places is now perhaps impossible. Helluland was no doubt some spot along the coast of Labrador. Markland has by some scholars been identified with Newfoundland, and Wineland with Nova Scotia or even with Long Island. Possibly, however, both Markland and Wineland were also along the Labrador coast. It has been argued that Wineland may have been the country about Hamilton Inlet, where the Hudson's Bay Company post of Rigolet is now situated; but any identification of Wineland must be mere conjecture, and all we can say with certainty is that Wineland

was somewhere along the northern seaboard of North America.

Wherever Wineland was, Leif and his men spent the winter there. When the spring came, they filled their ship with a cargo of timber and 'wine-berries,' and then set sail for Greenland. They had a fair wind behind them, and Leif reached without mishap, in due course, his father's home at Brattahlid. His arrival seems to have created a considerable stir. 'There was much talk,' says the saga, 'about Leif's Wineland voyage.' Leif no doubt made a very handsome profit out of the timber and 'wine-berries' he brought back with him ; and he must have won great honour on account of his discoveries. Indeed, to this day, he deserves the proud title of the first Canadian explorer.

It might have been expected that Leif, having made such a success of his first voyage to Wineland, would have embarked upon another. Such, however, was not the case, so far as we know. Perhaps by this time he was surfeited with adventure, and wished to settle down—especially since his father, Eric the Red, died the next winter. Perhaps the fate of the expeditions which followed his in rapid succession chilled any desire he may have had to see Wineland again. First of all, his brother Thorwald, who borrowed his ship and spent a year or so making further explorations in Wineland, was

killed by the natives, with whom the Northmen now first came into conflict. Next, Thorfinn Karlsefni, a wealthy Norwegian merchant who married Leif the Lucky's sister-in-law, tried to establish a colony in Wineland ; but he too came into conflict with the savage natives, and was compelled to give up his project. Lastly, Leif's sister Freydis organised an expedition, which spent the winter at the houses Leif had built ; but among the members of the expedition bitter dissension arose, and the enterprise ended in a carnival of blood. Freydis fell out with the two Icelandic merchants who were her partners in the venture, and she not only caused all the men in the rival party to be put to death, but she slew with her own hand five women who were with them.

This tragic climax to the Wineland voyages seems to have saddened the soul of Leif the Lucky. 'I have no heart,' he said, 'to treat my sister Freydis as she deserves.' Perhaps he began to think that a curse rested on the country which he had called Wineland the Good. At any rate, he seems to have made no further attempt to revisit its shores ; and so far as we know, he settled down at Brattahlid in Greenland, to a quiet old age. It may be that within the ruined walls of the cathedral at Gardar there still repose the bones of the man who introduced Christianity into Greenland, and who, first of white men, set foot on North American soil.

For very many years after the death of Leif the Lucky, the Northmen of Greenland probably continued to visit the shores of Markland and Wineland. We hear of one such voyage as late as the year 1347. But there is nothing to show that any successful attempt was made by the Greenlanders to establish a colony in Wineland; and, indeed, toward the end of the fourteenth century the Norse settlements in Greenland were themselves wiped out. The Eskimos, who were at that time one of the most savage races in the world, fell on the Greenland settlements, carried off the inhabitants, and left nothing but the bare and ruined walls which visitors to Greenland see to-day.

In this way, the frail link which bound Europe to America was severed; and the very memory of Wineland passed out of European minds. Only in the primitive literature of the people of Iceland did the evidence of its existence lie buried. Consequently, the discoveries of the Northmen left behind them no tangible result; and it was not until Christopher Columbus and John Cabot set out on their great transatlantic voyages toward the end of the fifteenth century, that the continent of America once more swam within the horizon of Europe. The well-known story of the voyages of Columbus does not fall within the limits of this book; but John Cabot was the man who, first after the Northmen, rediscovered the shores of Canada, and his is the next story on which we come.

THE VOYAGES OF A VENETIAN ADVENTURER

IN the year 1461—the year in which the Wars of the Roses in England reached their climax—there came to Venice to seek his fortune a young man from Genoa. Venice was at that time the great mercantile centre of southern Europe; its merchant navy controlled the trade of the Mediterranean and of the Orient; and ambitious young men flocked to it to carve out careers for themselves.

The name of this young man was Giovanni Caboto, or, to give him the name under which later he became famous, and which is merely an English translation of his name—John Cabot. About his early youth we know nothing, beyond the bare fact that he was born in Genoa, and was thus a contemporary and compatriot of Christopher Columbus. There is, indeed, a possibility that Columbus and Cabot may have known each other as boys in Genoa. Genoa, however, did not afford to either of them a scope for his energy; and Columbus drifted off to Spain, while Cabot made his way to Venice.

In Venice Cabot entered the service of one of the great Venetian trading-houses. He became what we to-day would call a commercial traveller

—or perhaps, to be more accurate, a 'buyer.' The line of goods which his house handled was the spices, perfumes, silks, and precious stones which came from the Far East. In quest of these commodities he travelled far and wide. On one of his trading voyages to the eastern Mediterranean, he made his way, we are told, to Mecca, the holy city of the Mohammedans, in the heart of the Arabian desert. This city was at that time the greatest market in the world for the exchange of goods from the West for those from the East; and here Cabot came into touch with the caravan-drivers who had brought across the heart of Central Asia the silks and spices of which he was in search.

It would have been surprising if a man of Cabot's inquiring frame of mind had not tried to discover from the caravan-drivers where the spices and precious stones their camels carried came from. When he asked them the question, however, he got little satisfaction.

'We do not know,' said they, 'but other caravans come to our homes with this merchandise from distant countries, and these people again say that it is brought to them from other remote regions.'

It became clear to Cabot that the spices and silks and gems came, by means of a chain of caravans, from a very great distance. The discovery of this fact set him thinking. He

knew something about geography, having 'studied the sphere' (as the phrase then went), and he was aware that the earth was round. It is a mistake to imagine that mediaeval scholars were ignorant of this fact, or that Christopher Columbus was the first to discover it. Learned men in Europe had known that the earth was round since the time of the Greek philosopher Aristotle; and it was only ignorant people who regarded the earth as flat. John Cabot, attempting to figure out on the 'sphere' the distance travelled by the caravans from Asia, came to the conclusion that the silks and spices they carried came from the island of Zipangu, or Japan; and it occurred to him that Zipangu might be reached more easily by sailing westward across the Atlantic Ocean than by the long camel route from Mecca to north-eastern Asia. He was encouraged in this brilliant idea by the fact that the 'sphere' or globe he used, which had been constructed by the geographer Ptolemy in the second century, was about 20 per cent. too small; and consequently he got the impression that the distance between the west coast of Europe and the east coast of Asia was about half as great as it actually was.

Once John Cabot had conceived the idea of sailing westward to 'the country where the spices grew,' he lost no time in attempting to put the idea into execution. Oriental commodities

were then in great demand in Europe. Spices, for example, were used for preserving food, refrigerators being unknown at that time; and if Cabot could discover a shorter and cheaper route whereby spices could be put on the European market, he would, he foresaw, make a vast fortune at one stroke. His idea was essentially an attempt to get rich quick; and the visions he saw of future wealth not only lent wings to his preparations, but also sustained him during the long and trying years which were to follow.

He left Venice, and came to England about the year 1484. Doubtless England, from its westerly position, seemed to him the most likely point of departure for his enterprise. In England he settled finally in Bristol, then the most important port in the country, as well as the farthest west. He laid the details of his project before the hard-headed merchants of Bristol; and so glowing were his accounts of the fabulous wealth that would accrue to them from the opening up of the new trade route, so plausible were the ideas he unfolded, that he persuaded them into giving his enterprise their financial support. He seems to have become at this time one of those monomaniacs who believe in themselves so completely that their very belief carries conviction. An Italian friend in London, to whom he later explained his ideas, wrote home to the Duke of Milan: 'He ex-

plained his plan in such a way that I too believe in it, though I have nothing to gain or lose by it.'

The merchants of Bristol fitted out an expedition, and in 1491 John Cabot set sail for the West. His plan was to find first the mythical islands of Brazil and the Seven Cities, which were shown on most mediaeval maps as lying to the west of Ireland. These islands he hoped might serve as stepping-stones on the way to Asia. Naturally, since they were pure figments of the imagination, he did not find them. A second expedition undertaken in 1492 yielded no better results; and no doubt the Bristol merchants, finding that Cabot's ventures were eating up a good deal of capital, and paying no dividends, began to grow lukewarm in their support. Perhaps Cabot himself grew discouraged, and saw his dreams of 'the wealth of Ormuz and of Ind' receding into the distance.

Then, suddenly, in the summer of 1493, the great news reached England that Christopher Columbus, by sailing westward from Spain, had the year before reached the islands of the Indies. This news completely altered the complexion of things for John Cabot. Where the merchants of Bristol had grown lukewarm, they now became again enthusiastic. The King of England, the cautious Henry the Seventh, became interested in Cabot, and issued letters patent to him authorising him to make a voyage

of discovery, and granting him a monopoly of the trade in any lands he might find. High hopes were held that Cabot might repeat the success of Columbus farther south; and no doubt Cabot's own confidence in his star rose apace.

All preparations for the expedition were at last completed, and in the spring of 1497 Cabot, with a crew of eighteen men in a small vessel called the *Matthew*, set sail on the voyage which was destined to bring him out on the shores of North America. John Cabot was not a literary person, like Columbus and Champlain, and we have no first-hand account of his voyages from him. Consequently, the details of the voyage are open to controversy. It would appear, however, that after rounding Ireland Cabot sailed steadily westward, though on an irregular and zigzag course, and at last, about five o'clock on Saturday morning, June 24, 1497, sighted the western extremity of Cape Breton Island.

Here he landed, and with the royal banner unfurled, took possession of the country in the name of the King of England. He found the soil fertile and the climate temperate. He did not meet with any inhabitants, though he and his men happened on some notched or blazed trees and some hunting snares which indicated that the country was inhabited. He deluded himself into thinking that both silk and brazil-

wood were to be obtained in the country ; and, on the whole, he persuaded himself that he had reached the north-eastern coast of Asia, and was within reach of the fabulously wealthy island of Zipangu. Since the expedition, however, was more in the nature of an exploring than a trading voyage, Cabot decided not to proceed farther for the time being, but to return forthwith to Bristol with the good news of his success. Having taken on board wood and water, he returned by way of the passage between Newfoundland and the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, and on August 6 he dropped anchor once more in Bristol harbour.

The arrival of the *Matthew* was the signal for a great demonstration in Bristol, as soon as her achievement became known. Immediately Cabot became a great man. He was received by the King, and so pleased was the careful Henry by what Cabot told him that he made him a present of ten pounds (equivalent to over $1000 in present-day currency), and granted him a pension of double that amount. He promised also to fit out for him in the spring a large fleet with which he might sail to Zipangu ; and Cabot began to boast that he would make London a greater depot for the spice trade than Alexandria itself.

The truth is that Cabot soon had his head turned by the attentions he received. He

bought himself a new silk doublet and hose, and he began to style himself 'the Admiral.' 'Nor does my Lord the Admiral,' one of his sarcastic Italian friends in London wrote home, 'esteem himself anything less than a Prince.' He made promises of feudal lands and bishoprics right and left. He promised an island to his barber, who straightway began to style himself a count; and several poor Italian monks who attached themselves to him were all promised bishoprics. The sarcastic Italian friend already quoted ventured to say that he himself might have had the promise of an archbishopric had he wanted it.

Pride goeth before a fall. When Cabot set sail for 'the new found land' in the spring of 1498, he had two large ships and a company of three hundred men. He reached the coast of North America safely, and he coasted down it all the way from Labrador to the neighbourhood of Chesapeake Bay. He came into relations with the Indians, and he did a little trading with them. But, to his disappointment and dismay, he found they had nothing but a few furs to offer him in barter. There was no sign to be found anywhere of the silks and spices and jewels of which he was in search; nor was there any trace of the Oriental civilisation which he expected to find. One cannot help wondering, whether, as he went farther and farther south

without finding the island of Zipangu, there may have flashed across his mind a suspicion of the truth—of the fact that the coast he had found was not that of Asia, but that of a vast continent which intervened.

However this may be, the time came when it was necessary to turn back. The season was already far advanced ; supplies were running low ; and the crews were anxious to get home. Cabot, therefore, reluctant and nonplussed, set his course for England ; and his two ships arrived there safely the same autumn.

The reception with which Cabot met on this occasion must have been a cold one. He had promised to bring back with him the fabulous wealth of the Orient ; and instead he returned with some paltry furs and a few fish. One can imagine the disgust and anger of the Bristol merchants when they saw his empty holds. One can imagine, too, the chagrin and disillusionment of John Cabot himself, as he realised that the dreams of a lifetime had turned into Dead Sea ashes, and as he saw the friends who had lionised him the year before fall away one by one.

With a significant suddenness he drops out of view. One fact, and one fact only, we know about him after his return in 1498. He drew his pension of twenty pounds from the collectors of customs at the port of Bristol in 1499. The rest is silence. Probably, in the autumn of

1499 or the spring of 1500, John Cabot passed to his rest, a broken-hearted and ruined man.

One likes to think, however, that to the last he retained his faith in the possibility of the western passage to Asia ; for he was more nearly right than wrong. And if he did not find the route to 'the country where the spices grew,' he showed the way to a source of wealth more inexhaustible, the American fisheries. He himself had told, after his first voyage, how off the banks of Newfoundland they had been able to catch codfish by lowering into the sea a basket weighted with a stone ; and his son, Sebastian Cabot, a young man with a very vivid imagination, had told on his return from the second voyage how the shoals of codfish had been 'so numerous they sometimes stayed his ships.' On account of the number of fast days at that time (for the Protestant Reformation had not yet taken place), fish were in great demand in Europe ; and if Cabot had only known it, he had stumbled on a gold-mine unawares. In the same way, he did not realise the possibilities of the American fur-trade, of which he was perhaps the pioneer. And so it remained for others to exploit the fabulous resources to which his genius led the way.

If Shakespeare had ever heard about the story of John Cabot, he might have turned it into one of his greatest tragedies.

John Cabot probably lived and died in the belief that the shores he had discovered were a part of Asia. Very soon after his death, however, it became clear that they were part rather of a vast barrier blocking the way to Asia. In 1513 the Spaniard Balboa, 'silent upon a peak in Darien,' first sighted the Pacific Ocean; and in 1520 an expedition under the Portuguese Magellan rounded Cape Horn. These discoveries definitely established the fact that America was a new continent; and henceforth the efforts of explorers were directed toward trying to find a way through to the 'Western Sea.' England, France, Spain, and Portugal vied with one another in attempting to find this western passage; and explorers searched almost the whole of the coast of North America. Breton sailors (after whom the island of Cape Breton is still named) even made their way into the Gulf of St. Lawrence. But these sailors, who were mainly interested in fishing, though perhaps they also made a beginning in the fur-trade with the Indians, appear to have thought that the Gulf was a bay; and the existence of that magnificent waterway into the interior, the St. Lawrence River, was not discovered until 1535, when a French sea-captain named Jacques Cartier sailed inland as far as the site of the present city of Montreal. The story of how Jacques Cartier overcame the difficulties in his way furnishes the subject matter of our next tale.

THE SECRET OF THE ST. LAWRENCE

AT the easternmost end of the Gaspé peninsula there is a deep bay, with a comparatively narrow entrance, which affords one of the finest harbours on the whole North Atlantic coast. It is called Gaspé Basin.

Into this harbour there sailed one day nearly four hundred years ago—in the summer of 1534 to be exact—two white-winged sailing vessels, of about sixty tons burden. Each of them flew at the masthead the fleur-de-lis flag of France; and they were commanded by a sea-captain from the port of St. Malo in Brittany, named Jacques Cartier. Captain Cartier had been commissioned by the King of France to explore the Atlantic coast of what is now Canada, with the object of finding, if possible, a passage through to the East Indies. He had already coasted along the shores of the Bay of Chaleur, only to find that it was a blind alley; and he had been making his way north again when one of his vessels lost its anchor in a storm, and he was compelled to take refuge in the deep shelter of Gaspé Basin.

He found here a band of about two hundred Huron Indians, who had come from the interior to fish for mackerel. They had, in fact, come

from the neighbourhood of what is now the city of Quebec ; and their chief was, as Cartier afterwards found, a brother of the great chief Donnacona, who was the head-man of all the Huron Indians in the St. Lawrence region. They were very poor ; and Cartier afterwards set down his opinion that ' all they had together, besides their boats and nets, was not worth five cents.' They were not, as one might have expected, fearful and terror-stricken when they saw the two strange white-winged ships running into the harbour ; but as the ships hove to, they crowded round them in their canoes, evincing every sign of pleasure and even delight. Obviously, they had already been visited by some of the Basque and Breton fishermen who had, even before this, been frequenting these waters. They had also, no doubt, traded with some of them ; and experience had taught them that the bearded, white-faced strangers in the white-winged ships brought them wonderful presents.

Their hopes were not disappointed. Captain Cartier had brought with him from the shops of St. Malo a variety of such trifling trinkets as were likely to delight the Indians' savage hearts. When he landed, he presented to each maiden of the village a small tin bell, the pleasing sound of which so enraptured the dusky beauties of the tribe that they fell with one accord on the

embarrassed sea-captain, and all but smothered him with their caresses. To the others he brought other cheap presents—ear-rings, pieces of coloured cloth, bits of tinsel, and the like—which seemed doubtless to the ignorant, poverty-stricken Hurons the most marvellous treasures they had ever seen.

Cartier remained in Gaspé Basin for a number of days—from July 15 to July 25—refitting his ships. During this time he and his men seem to have remained on the best of terms with their dark-skinned hosts. The day before he sailed away, however, there occurred an incident which threatened for a time to disturb the friendly relations that had existed. With the object of asserting the claims of the King of France to the country on which he had landed, Cartier set up on the point at the entrance to Gaspé Basin a huge cross, thirty feet high, and hung on it a shield emblazoned with the lilies of France. Having done this, he gathered his men about him and, like the good Catholic he was, knelt down, and with uplifted hands gave thanks to God for His goodness. The Indians watched this solemn ceremony with polite and reverent awe, while it lasted; but they do not appear to have been entirely at ease in their minds as to what it meant, for, as Cartier was making ready to depart, the chief, specially attired for the occasion in an old bearskin,

paddled out from the shore, and proceeded to deliver from his canoe a long harangue, protesting against what Cartier had done.

Just what the old chief objected to is not certain. Perhaps he thought that the cross was a totem-pole, and he feared its malign influence; perhaps he realised that it was the assertion on the part of the French of a claim to the ownership of the country; perhaps he objected to Cartier's going farther inland. Whatever his fears, Cartier had no difficulty in allaying them. He invited the old man on board his ship: and assured him that the cross was merely a mark of navigation to guide the white-winged ships along the coast, and that he did not propose to go any farther inland. By a generous display of presents, and by the promise of more presents on his return, he actually persuaded the old chief to allow his two sons to accompany him to France, on the understanding that he would bring them back to Canada the following year.

The names of the two sons of the Huron chief were Taignoagny and Domagaya. They are the first of the Canadian Indians with whom we are acquainted by name; and they were destined to play a not unimportant part in the history of Canadian exploration. They allowed themselves to be dressed up in the strange garb of the white man; they sailed

Stadacona (Quebec)
Hochelaga (Montreal)
Two Mountains
I. of Orleans
L. St. Peter
L. St. Louis
Pembroke
Renfrew
Ottawa
L. Champlain
MAINE
Newfoundland
Gulf of St. Lawrence
Gaspe Basin
B. of Chaleurs
Miquelon
St. Pierre I.
Great Bank
Cape Breton I
NOVA SCOTIA
Port Royal
Sault Ste. Marie
Michilimackinac
LAKE SUPERIOR
LAKE MICHIGAN
LAKE HURON
Penetanguishene
Simcoe
ONTARIO
L. ERIE
NEW YORK
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Chesapeake B.
Map
to illustrate the journeys of
JOHN CABOT, JACQUES CARTIER
AND SAMUEL DE CHAMPLAIN.
Miles
100 0 100 200 300 400
Stanford's Geog. Estab. London.

back to France with Cartier, and there spent the winter of 1534-1535, learning the language of the French, and instructing Cartier in the rudiments of the Huron tongue ; and then, in the spring of 1535, they returned with him to America, to help—and to hinder—him in his further explorations.

It would be interesting to know what they thought of the long ocean voyage and of the scenes which met their eyes in France. The crowded harbour of St. Malo, the narrow streets of the mediaeval town, the tall cathedral, the castles in the country round about—they must have seen all these, and curious ideas must have coursed through their primitive brains. Wonder, fear, and admiration may have overwhelmed them in turn. Unfortunately, however, we have no knowledge of their mental processes and reactions—except that Domagaya appears to have been impressed with the greatness of the white man's civilisation, whereas the less open-minded Taignoagny seems to have regarded it as a meaningless show.

As the winter wore on, and Cartier and the two young Indians began, as a result of their language study, to understand each other better, Cartier doubtless learnt of the existence of that great waterway, the entrance to which he had missed the previous summer, the St. Lawrence River. At any rate, when the spring

came, and Cartier once more crossed the Atlantic, he lost no time in making his way into the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and thence into the St. Lawrence River.

At the Island of Orleans, Taignoagny and Domagaya at last met their own people, and great were the rejoicings at their return. After much feasting, Cartier and his men were led to the Indian village of Stadacona, situated on the very site of the present city of Quebec; and there he was introduced to the uncle of Taignoagny and Domagaya, the chief Donnacona, who ruled all the Hurons in that region.

Up to this point Taignoagny and Domagaya had been most favourably disposed toward Cartier, and had fallen in unreservedly with his plans for the exploration of the St. Lawrence, which Cartier hoped would lead him to the Pacific Ocean. As soon, however, as they reached their own people, their behaviour began to change. Doubtless Donnacona began to chide them for their rashness in leading the white-faced strangers into the heart of his domains; and when they told him of Cartier's intention of going farther up the river, he immediately voiced his serious displeasure. The very day after Cartier's arrival at Stadacona, he was informed that Donnacona disapproved of his proceeding farther; and the day after

that Taignoagny brought him some presents—including some innocent little Indian children—which were, said Taignoagny, for the purpose of persuading him to turn back.

Jacques Cartier, however, was a brave man who was not easily turned aside. He told Taignoagny that he intended to go where he wished, whether Donnacona liked it or not; and, in order to add emphasis to his words, he touched off his cannon, awakening for the first time the echo of artillery among the heights of Quebec and Levis. In consternation, Donnacona and his braves fled howling into the forest. 'It was,' Cartier said, 'as though Hell had broken loose.' The Indians had had their first lesson—their first taste of the white man's thunder.

Cartier perhaps imagined that this display of military force would cow the Indians into withdrawing their objections to his farther progress. If so, he was mistaken; for, once the terror inspired by his cannon had passed away, the Indian cunning reasserted itself.

A few days later, the Indians staged a performance, with the connivance of Taignoagny and Domagaya, which was intended to persuade Cartier, definitely and finally, of the folly of going farther. Three of the Indians were dressed up, with horns on their heads, and with faces hideously painted, as emissaries

of the Indian god Cudragny. These three embarked in a canoe, and bore down on Cartier's ships, reciting in a loud and monotonous voice a message from the god. As the canoe touched the shore, the would-be devils fell prostrate, as though dead; and Donnacona and his people, who rushed toward them, picked them up, and carried them, with much commotion, into the forest. Shortly afterward, Cartier and his men saw Taignoagny and Domagaya rush back to the shore, as though dumbfounded by some terrible news.

'Jesu, Jesu, Jesu,' cried Taignoagny, with the savage's aptitude in picking up Christian oaths.

'Jesu! Marie! Jacques Cartier!' cried Domagaya.

Cartier called out, and asked them what the trouble was.

Thereupon they informed him that the god Cudragny had sent his messengers to tell the French that there was so much snow and ice up the river that whoever went there would be frozen to death.

At this startling intelligence Cartier and his men laughed heartily, understanding at last the meaning of the mumbo-jumbo they had been witnessing.

'Cudragny,' called out Cartier, 'is nothing but a fool and a noddy; he does not know

what he is saying or what he is doing. And as for the cold,' he added piously, 'Christ will protect us from that, if we believe in Him.'

The next day, oblivious of the warnings of the god Cudragny, and regardless of the wishes of Donnacona, Cartier set sail up the St. Lawrence in one of his ships. He was determined to wrest from the river its stubborn secret. Was it, after all, the much-sought-after route to the Western Sea that Balboa had seen, and the crews of Magellan had crossed; or was it merely a channel that ended in nothing? He had heard from the Indians vague hints of a large body of water to which the St. Lawrence led; but he could not be sure of what they told him until he had seen the truth of it with his eyes.

He made his way up the river, through what is to-day the garden of the province of Quebec. He was charmed with the fertility of the countryside, and he noted particularly—for the autumn was now coming on—the rich beauty of the trees and the profusion of the native grapevines. The Indians with whom he came into contact were all friendly, and, unlike Donnacona and his nephews, were glad to help him on his way. When he reached the widening of the river, now known as Lake St. Peter, he was compelled, by the lowness of the water, to leave his ship behind him, and to take to his

small boats. In these he and some of his men, guided by some of the Indians, pushed on up stream, until they reached the island of Montreal, where they found a great Indian village named Hochelaga.

At Hochelaga Cartier received a royal welcome. He was met by a vast concourse of more than a thousand savages, who danced with joy as he landed, and who loaded down his boats with presents of fish and of corn-meal bread. He distributed among them presents as usual; and all night long the forest resounded to their jubilations, as they danced about their bonfires. Now, indeed, became apparent the motives which had actuated Donnacona, Taignoagny, and Domagaya, in attempting to prevent Cartier from going up the river. These motives had been purely selfish: the people of Stadacona, simple souls, had been anxious to keep Cartier and his wonderful presents for themselves, and had been loath to share their new-found blessings with their fellow-savages to the west.

After the formalities of his official welcome were over, and after he recited a simple religious service in the heart of the Indian village, Cartier made his way up to the crest of Mount Royal —to which he, indeed, gave the name. There, like Moses on Pisgah, he got a sight of the Promised Land. To the north-west he saw

the blue ribbon of the Ottawa River opening out into the Lake of the Two Mountains; to the south-west he saw the rapids of the St. Lawrence broadening into Lake St. Louis. The Indians told him half-understood tales of great bodies of water to which these rivers led; and perhaps Cartier still hoped against hope that these were a part of the Western Sea of which he was in search. Perhaps he felt that the great river had all but yielded up its secret.

The season, however, was growing late. Soon the bitter Canadian winter would be falling; and Cartier began to think of the safety of his men. He was a sailor, not a landsman; and he never felt happy when far away from his ships. He decided, therefore, with doubtless many a longing glance over his shoulder, to turn back, and to spend the winter with the rest of his men at Stadacona.

That winter—perhaps the first which any of the inhabitants of southern Europe had spent in Canada—was terrible beyond anything that Cartier had hoped or feared. The temperature sank many degrees below zero; the dreaded scurvy attacked the little band of white men; and many of them died. 'Sometimes,' Cartier wrote afterwards, 'we were constrained to bury some of the dead under the snow, because we were not able to dig graves

for them, the ground being so hard frozen, and we so weak.' Had it not been that Domagaya, who seems to have been a kind-hearted fellow on the whole, brought them a supply of the bark of the white spruce, which was the Indian remedy for scurvy, it is possible that Cartier and all his men might have been wiped out of existence, and the secret of the St. Lawrence might again have been lost.

The scurvy, however, was not the only peril which the little band in the improvised fort at Stadacona had to face. Hardly less deadly was the danger of attack from Donnacona and his warriors. Donnacona would appear not to have forgiven Cartier for having ignored his wishes; and perhaps he thought that if Cartier and his men were exterminated, it would prevent any other white men from invading his dominions. In the weakened condition of the defenders of the fort, an attack by the Indians was something to be gravely dreaded; and Cartier strove by every device in his power to stave off the threatened hostilities. In order to deceive the Indians as to the extent to which the scurvy had spread among his men, he kept up a continual rattle of hammers and sticks inside the fort, to give the impression that a large number of men were busily engaged; and he even had two or three of the less feeble among his crews show themselves occasionally

about the gate of the fort, so that he might appear and order them back to work.

Toward the end of the winter, however, the crisis came. One day Domagaya crept surreptitiously into the fort, and warned Cartier that Donnacona was at last gathering the tribe for an attack. New faces, Cartier observed, began to appear in the Indian village; and Donnacona began to adopt a high-handed attitude, refusing audience to Cartier's messengers, and having them peremptorily escorted back to the fort. The crafty Taignoagny also gave rise to suspicion by renewed attempts at friendliness, and by a request to Cartier that the latter should seize and carry back to France a rival of Taignoagny's named Agouna.

Cartier decided that the time had come for action. He had been hurrying on his preparations for the return voyage, and as soon as these were completed, about the beginning of May, he invited Donnacona, Taignoagny, Domagaya (who seems to have thrown in his lot with the plotters), and several others to pay him a visit at the fort. Once he had them within the gates of the fort, he seized them and carried them on board his ships. Then he weighed anchor, and set sail for St. Malo.

Neither Donnacona, nor Taignoagny, nor Domagaya ever saw again the rugged shores

of their native land. The following winter, in their cramped quarters at St. Malo, they fell ill, like so many of the American aborigines transplanted to European soil ; and long before Jacques Cartier was ready to recross the Atlantic, they were resting beneath holy ground in France. Thus died the guardians of the secret of the St. Lawrence. Henceforth the gateway was open ; and it only remained for the French explorers to enter in.

Though Jacques Cartier unlocked the gateway of the St. Lawrence, no one attempted to follow up his explorations for three-quarters of a century. This was because, during these years, France was torn by the religious wars between the Huguenots and the Holy League—between those who adhered to the Protestant Reformation and those who remained faithful to the Catholic Church. This struggle so engrossed the attention, not only of the French government, but even of the French people, that no thought seems to have been given to exploration in the far-off wilds of Canada. The fishing fleet came out, it is true, year after year to the Banks of Newfoundland ; but no further attempt was made by Frenchmen to find the elusive passage to the Western Sea until 1613, when Samuel de Champlain, the hero of our next story, made his first expedition into the interior of what is now central Canada.

THE CANOE-TRIPS OF CHAMPLAIN

IN the year 1867—the year in which the Dominion of Canada came into being—a settler on the banks of the Ottawa River, not far from the town of Renfrew, made a discovery. He was breaking some new land, and as the ploughshare drove through the virgin soil, it suddenly turned up a number of metal objects. Two of these were small silver cups, on each of which was a crest or device which long interment in the ground had almost obliterated. Others were small vessels of copper, much rusted and decayed, which might at one time have been used for cooking purposes. Lastly, there was a curious thick disc of beaten brass, about six inches in diameter, on the face of which were markings like those of a compass, and also, in clear numerals, the date 1603.

The worthy farmer who unearthed these curiosities must have been much puzzled by them. He must have wondered what they were, and who had left them to be buried in such an unlikely spot. It is clear, however, that he had no inkling of their value and significance, because, it would appear, he sold the little silver cups to a passing tinker, who no doubt melted them down, and he threw the

rusty copper vessels away among the 'old metals' of the farm-house. One of them, indeed, was used to cover over a leaky spot in an old log canoe. The brass disc, however, he kept—perhaps because it was a curiosity and an antiquity, perhaps because it could not readily be put to any useful purpose. Neglected and ignored, it lay knocking about the farm-house for a number of years.

Then, one day, there came to the farm a gentleman from Toronto. He was shown the brass disc, and listened with great interest to the story of how it had been found. In the end, he persuaded the farmer to allow him to take it away with him, in order to show it to some friends of his, who, he said, would be able to tell what it was. He brought it back with him to Toronto; and there it was examined by a number of scholars and antiquarians. Photographs were taken of it, and pamphlets were written about it. Finally, those who were best fitted to form a judgment came to the conclusion that the disc was nothing less than an astrolabe, or astronomical instrument for the determination of latitude, lost by Samuel de Champlain, the 'Founder of New France,' on his first exploring expedition into what is now the province of Ontario, in 1613.

The farm on which the astrolabe was found lies across one of the old Indian portages on the

Ottawa River; and there can be little doubt that it and the other utensils slipped out of the baggage of Champlain's party as he was crossing this portage. We have Champlain's own account of his trip up the Ottawa River in 1613; and while he does not say, in so many words, that he lost his astrolabe at this point, the evidence all goes to show conclusively that he must have lost it here. Up to this point, he says repeatedly, 'I took the latitude of this place, and found it to be so many degrees, etc.' After crossing this portage, however, he says nothing about taking observations for latitude, and when he attempts to give the latitude, he is obviously guessing. It is practically certain, therefore, that the articles turned up by the ploughshare on the Muskrat Lake portage in 1867 were lost by Champlain on one of his epoch-making canoe-trips over two hundred and fifty years before.

Before ever Samuel de Champlain embarked on his explorations in the interior of Canada, he had passed a life of incident and adventure beyond the ordinary. Born of a family of sailors in a seaport town on the Bay of Biscay, he had already traversed many 'perilous seas, in faëry lands forlorn.' In the service of the King of Spain, he had visited Central America, where his keen eye had suggested to him, three centuries before it became an accomplished

fact, the possibility of the Panama Canal ; in the service of the King of France, he had explored the coasts of Maine and Nova Scotia ; he had helped to found, in 1604, the French colony of Port Royal in the Annapolis valley ; and in 1608 he had established, on the St. Lawrence River, the tiny settlement which was destined to become the city of Quebec.

The way in which Champlain became interested in the exploration of the interior of Canada is told in his *Journal.* Like all his contemporaries, he was anxious to find a route from the Atlantic to the Pacific ; for, though Europeans had begun to discover the wealth of the American continent, they still hankered after an easy route to the fabled riches of the East. In 1611, Champlain spent part of the summer on the island of Montreal, where he heard from the Indians accounts of great bodies of water to the west and north-west. His curiosity aroused, he made arrangements for a young Frenchman, named Nicolas de Vignau, to accompany some of the Indians up the Ottawa River, with a view to obtaining further information about ' the upper country.' Vignau spent the winter of 1611-12 with an Algonquin tribe on Allumette Island, opposite to what is now the town of Pembroke on the Ottawa River ; and when he returned to Paris in 1612, he brought back with him a tale which greatly

stirred the minds of Champlain and the shrewd merchants who were associated with him.

He asserted that the Ottawa River took its rise in a lake which communicated with a northern sea, on the farther side of which were China and the Indies and the Island of Zipangu, or Japan. He said that he himself had seen this northern sea, that he had witnessed with his own eyes the wreck of an English ship on its shores, and that he had actually talked with a young English boy who had survived the shipwreck, and was still a captive among the Indians.

This story, as it turned out, was a pure fabrication. Vignau had never stirred from the Algonquin lodges on Allumette Island. But he told his story with such plausible detail that it completely imposed upon even the wise Champlain. As a matter of fact, as we shall see later, an English ship under Henry Hudson had in 1610 penetrated into Hudson Bay, and word of Hudson's voyage reached England in 1611. This fact seemed to lend confirmation to the fairy tale that Vignau had woven ; and the idea that the English were anticipating the French in the discovery of the north-west passage to Asia roused Champlain and his friends to immediate action.

On May 27, 1613, Champlain set out from St. Helen's Island, opposite Montreal, on a

voyage of discovery up the Ottawa River. He had with him four Frenchmen, one of whom was the egregious Nicolas de Vignau, and one Indian. None of the Frenchmen were expert paddlers, and it was with great difficulty that the party made their way up the river in their two canoes. In the Long Sault, a series of rapids extending over twelve miles, and now paralleled by the Carillon and Grenville Canals, Champlain came near to losing his life. As he was towing his canoe up the turbulent water—the bush being too thick for portaging—it was caught by the current and he was pulled into the stream. If he had not fallen between two rocks, he would no doubt have been drowned; and it is not too much to say that Canadian history might then have been vastly different.

After a week's toilsome paddling and portaging, the little party reached the site of the city of Ottawa. Champlain stood on the cliff where now rise the Canadian Houses of Parliament; and he was much struck by the beauty of the scene, and the grandeur of the Rideau and Chaudière Falls. Little guessing, however, that he was treading the ground where the future capital of the country he was founding was destined to rise, he pushed on; and two days later he reached the Muskrat Lake portage, near the site of the present town of Pembroke.

Here it was he lost his astrolabe. The portage

was a long and difficult one, and it is easy to understand from the *Journal* how the loss took place.

'We were greatly troubled,' writes Champlain, 'in making this portage; I myself was loaded with three arquebuses, as many paddles, my cloak, and some small articles. I encouraged my men,' he adds, 'who were loaded yet more heavily, but who suffered more from the mosquitoes than from their burdens.'

Under these circumstances it was not surprising that some of the 'small articles' should have been lost, without their loss being observed. Or perhaps Nicolas de Vignau himself, foreseeing that his deception was likely to be soon unmasked, deliberately cast away the astrolabe, in the hope that, without it, Champlain might be obliged to turn back.

If so, the stratagem was unsuccessful. Champlain pushed ahead, and in another day or so reached Allumette Island. Here the Algonquins with whom Vignau had spent the winter of 1611-12 were still camped. Confronted by them, Vignau broke down, and confessed that his story had been a tissue of lies. If he had ever visited the Sea of the North, said the Indians, it had been in his sleep. They were greatly scandalised by his romancings, and wished to put him to death. Even the equable Champlain was very angry with him, and for a time his life hung by a

thread. In the end, Champlain merely cast him off. 'We left him,' he says grimly, 'in God's keeping.'

There was now no motive for further advance, and Champlain, foiled and crestfallen, turned back toward the St. Lawrence. Many a man, after such an experience, would have washed his hands of the whole business of exploration, and would have turned to other tasks. But it was not so with Champlain. He fell back merely in order to jump better the next time. He was, indeed, the sort of explorer who could not shut out from his ears the call of the unknown :

> 'Something hidden. Go and find it. Go and look behind the Ranges—
> Something lost behind the Ranges. Lost and waiting for you. Go!'

Only two years later he was on the trail again. This time he set out with two Frenchmen and ten Indians, to visit the country from which the Huron Indians had begun to come down to Montreal to trade. Embarking at the Sault St. Louis, he made his way up the Ottawa River again to Allumette Island ; thence he paddled up to the Mattawa River, crossed over into Lake Nipissing, paddled down the French River to the Georgian Bay ; and through the thirty thousand islands of the Bay he thridded his course southward until he reached

what is now the harbour of Penetanguishene. Here he found himself in the heart of the Huron country, where the famous and ill-fated Jesuit missions were later to be established.

Among the Hurons he received a cordial welcome, and he was invited to accompany them on a warlike expedition against the Iroquois south of Lake Ontario. He accepted the invitation. With five hundred Huron warriors, he paddled up the Severn River to Lake Simcoe, crossed Lake Simcoe, portaged into Balsam or Sturgeon Lake, and then proceeded down the chain of lakes which lie at the head of the Trent valley. From the mouth of the Trent River, the party crossed Lake Ontario, and plunged into what is now the northern part of New York State. Here a battle took place between the Hurons and their hereditary foes, the Iroquois—a battle in which Champlain was slightly wounded. Then the Hurons retreated, and Champlain was compelled to retreat with them. He wished to return to Quebec by Lake Ontario, but his new allies would not agree to his proposal, and he had to accompany them all the way back to the Huron country south of the Georgian Bay. Here he was forced to spend the winter; and it was only when the spring came that he was allowed to return, by way of Lake Simcoe and the Trent valley, to the St. Lawrence. By the

time he got back to Quebec, he must have covered fully two thousand miles of wilderness travel; and in doing this he had laid bare a good part of the geography of the present province of Ontario.

It is difficult to realise that these canoe-trips in Ontario took place five years before the Pilgrim Fathers ever set foot on Plymouth Rock in New England. At that early date, Samuel de Champlain had seen with his own eyes more of Eastern Canada than any but a favoured few even in these days of railways and steamships and motor cars.

Champlain's exploring days ended in 1616. He was by that time approaching fifty years of age, and was doubtless no longer equal to the hardships of the explorer's life. He had trained, however, a number of bold and daring lieutenants who carried on his work. One of these, Étienne Brulé, who had been one of the two Frenchmen who accompanied Champlain to the Huron country in 1615, pushed further the work of exploration in almost every direction. He crossed Lake Erie, and travelled south as far as Chesapeake Bay; he roamed all over the peninsula of western Ontario; he discovered the strait of Sault Ste. Marie; and he pushed northward into Lake Superior. Later, in 1634, Champlain sent out a young man named Jean Nicollet to push westward in the hope of finding a 'great water' of which Brulé and

others had heard tales from the Indians. This 'great water'—which the French, of course, thought must be the Pacific Ocean—was probably the Mississippi River; and Nicollet passed, in search of it, through the Strait of Michilimackinac and across Lake Michigan, and actually reached the height of land which divides the valley of the St. Lawrence from the valley of the Mississippi. In the wake of these explorers there followed a succession of Jesuit missionaries and fur-trading *coureurs-de-bois*, who gradually filled in the outlines of the geography of the region of the Great Lakes and beyond. Among these *coureurs-de-bois*, however, two stand out pre-eminent—Médard Chouart des Groseilliers and Pierre Esprit Radisson.

The story of the achievements of these two men was almost unknown until only a little over a quarter of a century ago, when there turned up in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, among the papers of the diarist, Samuel Pepys, Radisson's own account of his explorations. This journal, which was first published in 1888, is one of the most extraordinary documents in the whole range of historical literature. It is written in grotesque and sometimes unintelligible English, with a disregard for dates and distances which contrasts strongly with the detailed accuracy, for example, of Champlain's narrative; but it contains, nevertheless, a story of vivid and compelling interest.

A FORTUNE IN FURS

IT was an August midnight in 1661. The little town of Three Rivers, on the north bank of the St. Lawrence, lay sleeping beneath the peaceful beams of the summer moon ; and no sound was heard save the occasional footfall of the sentinel at the gate.

Out of the shadow of one of the houses adjacent to the gate stole three figures who carried packs on their backs and guns in their hands, and who strode almost noiselessly in the direction of the sentry.

As they approached, the low voice of the sentry rang out, ' Who goes there ? '

' Hush ! ' answered one of the figures, ' it is Groseilliers.'

The sentry drew himself up and saluted. Groseilliers was the captain of the guard, and kept the keys of the town. It was true, as every one in the settlement knew, that Groseilliers had been forbidden by old Jacques de la Poterie, the governor of Three Rivers, to leave the town ; and doubtless the worthy soldier on guard was torn for an instant between his affection for his captain and his reverence for the constituted authorities. But his hesitation lasted for but a moment ; and on Groseilliers drawing forth his keys, the sentry

helped him open the gate. The three heavily laden figures slipped out into the darkness, and, followed by the sentry's fervent *Bon voyage*, disappeared in the direction of the landing-place.

Thus, in the dead of night, and with careful secrecy, began a journey which was destined to become famous in the history of Canadian exploration.

The three figures that left Three Rivers that August midnight were Médard Chouart des Groseilliers, his young brother-in-law Pierre Esprit Radisson, and a *coureur-de-bois* named François Larivière.

Chouart des Groseilliers was a fur-trader who had lived a varied and adventurous life. He had been with the Jesuit Fathers in 1646-47 at Ste. Marie in the Huron country, when the missions were wiped out by the Iroquois ; he had covered more ground probably than any other fur-trader in New France ; and he had prospered to such an extent that he was ranked among the men of substance in Three Rivers.

Radisson, his youthful companion, had, however, led a life even more adventurous and picturesque. He had come to Canada from France in 1651, a boy of only seventeen years of age. One year after his arrival in the country he had been captured by the Iroquois, while he was hunting with two companions

in the neighbourhood of Lake St. Peter. His two companions were murdered before his eyes ; but his courage, when he was captured, was so admired by the Iroquois, that his own life was spared. He was adopted by one of the Iroquois chiefs, and was received into the tribe as a warrior. For two years Radisson lived with the Iroquois, hunting and fighting with them ; and had he been cast in a less heroic mould, he would probably have sunk to the level of savagery to which so many other white men, adopted into Indian tribes, did sink. But Radisson longed for Three Rivers and civilisation ; and as soon as an opportunity presented itself, he escaped to the Dutch colony at Orange, to the south. Thence he got passage to La Rochelle, in France, and from La Rochelle he made his way back to Three Rivers.

On his return Radisson had entered the fur-trade with the husband of his half-sister, Chouart des Groseilliers. Groseilliers had supplied the capital, and Radisson had supplied the brains. Not content with the old hunting grounds, Radisson and Groseilliers had struck out into new and unexplored regions. In 1658 they had penetrated to Green Bay, on Lake Michigan ; and thence they had struck inland until, first of white men, they came to the waters of the Upper Mississippi. There is even reason for believing that they reached the

Missouri and the Bad Lands beyond ; but the English jargon in which Radisson afterwards attempted to describe his travels is so unintelligible in parts that one cannot be sure of this.

From this expedition the brothers-in-law returned in 1660 with a cargo of furs which saved New France from a beaver famine. So great were their profits that they determined, in spite of the dangers which lay in their path, to repeat their venture. They were particularly anxious to do this, since they had heard tales from the Indians of a 'great bay in the north,' about which furs were to be found in great abundance. Radisson felt sure that this was the bay which had been discovered by Henry Hudson half a century before ; and the explorer in him, as well as the fur-trader, urged him on.

But the government of New France kept in those days a very tight hold on the fur-traders. Every one who engaged in the fur-trade had to procure a licence from the governor, and had to hand over to the government one-quarter of the proceeds of his venture. When the Marquis d'Argenson, who was then the governor at Quebec, heard of the plans of Radisson and Groseilliers, he refused to let them depart on their expedition unless they agreed to hand over to him, not one-quarter, but one-half of the

profits of their trade, and to take with them some of his servants to look after his interests. This unprecedented proposal Radisson and Groseilliers rejected with indignation. They did not desire to be burdened with any superfluous men, and they were willing to give the government its legal share of their profits, and no more. Therefore, on a night of August 1661, the brothers-in-law quietly slipped out of the gates of Three Rivers, and took French leave of governors, fur-trading licences, and all such vexatious restrictions on individual liberty.

The route that Radisson and Groseilliers followed in their journey westward was the same as was used until nearly two centuries later by the brigades of the fur-trading companies. They paddled and portaged up the Ottawa, and across by way of Lake Nipissing and the French River to Lake Huron; they coasted the north shore of Lake Huron as far as Sault Ste. Marie; and there they portaged into Lake Superior.

First of all, a few miles above Three Rivers, the three Frenchmen were joined by a party of seven canoes of Indians from the upper country, who were there by appointment with Radisson to act as an escort. The little fleet of canoes ascended the St. Lawrence to the Island of Montreal, and then turned in by

the back river to the Ottawa, without going near the settlement of Ville Marie. In their ascent of the Ottawa they had to use the most elaborate precautions. It was only a year since, at the foot of the Grand Sault, Dollard and his sixteen young crusaders had been cut to pieces by the Iroquois; and the forests were still infested by these implacable foes of the French. Once the party heard guns. Turning a bend in the river, they discovered five Iroquois canoes, just in time to avoid them. The next day they came on the fresh tracks of the Iroquois at a portage. The frightened Indians from the upper country dashed off through the woods, with their canoes on their heads. Radisson and Groseilliers, accustomed as they were to the bush, kept up with them only with difficulty. The third white man, Larivière, fell far behind, and had to be abandoned to his fate. He was picked up, in a starving and almost insensible condition, about two weeks later, by a party of French hunters.

Three days after the loss of Larivière, Radisson and Groseilliers caught up with seven more canoes of upper country Indians. The reinforcement proved a fortunate one; for the very next day the party was set upon at a portage by the Iroquois. In the running fight which ensued, Radisson and his men had the

best of the argument. They stormed the barricade in which the Iroquois took refuge; and nothing saved the Iroquois from extermination but a terrific storm of thunder and sheeted rain that swept across the forest. 'I think,' wrote afterwards the disgusted Radisson, 'that the Devil himself sent that storm to let those wretches escape, so that they might destroy more innocents.'

The defeat of the Iroquois made the danger of another attack still greater; and Radisson and his men exerted all their efforts to leave the Iroquois country behind them as soon as possible. From Friday night to Tuesday morning they paddled steadily, without so much as stopping to kindle a camp fire. On Tuesday they reached Lake Nipissing, and there they rested. They had travelled from Three Rivers to Lake Nipissing in twenty-two days, and during that time they had not slept an hour on land.

By October the explorers had reached Sault Ste. Marie, and had entered Lake Superior. They coasted along the southern shore of the lake, until they came to its western extremity. Here they landed, and here, near the site of the present towns of Ashland and Washburn, Wisconsin, they built the first fur-post in the great North-West.

The post was rushed up by the brothers-in-

law in two days. It was on the side of a river, built in the shape of a triangle, with the base at the water side. The walls were of unbarked logs; the roof was of branches interlaced, through which the smoke of the camp fire easily found its way. Beside the fire, two pine logs overlaid with saplings and brush made a bed. Scattered everywhere, littering the floor so that it was difficult to move about, were the firearms, clothing, and merchandise of the two traders.

Naturally, the position of this little fort, situated thousands of miles from help in the midst of an unknown country, was precarious in the extreme. At first, the traders, who had now been left by their Indians, took turns at keeping watch; but that proved a very arduous arrangement, and Radisson's fertile brain devised a substitute. About the little fort he stretched in the grass and undergrowth carefully concealed cords, and to these he fastened bells, which would give immediate warning of the approach of any prowling savages. With these new sentries, the two traders were able to sleep soundly without fear of surprise.

Soon the Indians of the neighbourhood, who were Crees, came flocking to the fort to see the white men and trade with them. At first there was danger that the savages might be tempted to kill the traders for the sake of their

firearms. But Radisson's genius found once again a means of warding off the danger. He rolled gunpowder in twisted tubes of birch bark, and ran a circle of this about the fort. When the Indians came to visit him, he touched off the gunpowder, and displayed to the amazed savages a circle of fire running along the ground around the cabin in a series of jumps. To the Indians it was magic ; and they regarded the traders as engirt with a charm.

Through the Crees the explorers came into direct relations with the Sioux. These horsemen of the prairies were among the most powerful and the most feared of all the Indian tribes ; and that Radisson and Groseilliers were able to obtain their good wishes, was of good augury for the French in the West. Radisson spent six weeks in the Sioux Country, hunting buffalo and deer. Then he struck back to the little fort at Lake Superior.

On his way back he met some Indians who were going up to summer at the ' Bay of the North ' (Hudson Bay). For years Radisson had been longing to discover the overland route to Hudson Bay ; and in spite of the fact that he was suffering from a severe sprain of the foot, he set out with them.

The party launched their canoes in a river flowing north—which river, it is now impossible to say. Whether or not Radisson actually

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reached Hudson Bay on this trip, scholars are not agreed. Whatever be the rights of the case, it cannot do any harm to reprint Radisson's own words :

'At last we came full sail to a deep bay . . . We came to the seaside, where we found an old house all demolished and battered with bullets. . . . . They [the Crees] told us about Europeans. . . . We went from isle to isle all that summer. . . . We went farther to see the place that the Indians were to pass the summer.'

If Radisson, as this passage seems to indicate, actually reached Hudson Bay overland, he was the first European to do it ; and to his title as discoverer of the Upper Mississippi must be added that of discoverer of the overland passage to Hudson Bay.

The spring of 1663 found the explorers back in the region of Lake Superior, preparing for a return to civilisation. They set out, accompanied by over seven hundred Indians ; and the pelts which they had obtained filled three hundred and sixty canoes. They paddled across Lake Superior ; scudded across Lake Huron and Lake Nipissing, with blankets raised for sails ; and from Lake Nipissing they rode safely down the Ottawa to Montreal. Here they were welcomed by the firing of cannon ; for they had arrived once more just in time to save New France from a beaver famine.

At Quebec a different welcome awaited the explorers. D'Argenson there had been succeeded by a new governor, the Baron d'Avaugour; but the authorities had not forgotten the contumelious manner in which Groseilliers and Radisson had set out in 1661. Not only had they gone without a fur-trading licence, but they had disobeyed the express orders of the King's representative. Such a flouting of the royal authority could not be allowed to pass without punishment. No sooner had Radisson and Groseilliers landed than Groseilliers was arrested and imprisoned by the governor's command. The brothers-in-law were fined on one pretext and another up to the tune of $110,000—more than one-third of the value of their cargo. Out of a cargo worth in modern money over $300,000, they had less than $200,000 left.

Great was the indignation of Radisson and Groseilliers over their treatment by D'Avaugour. With the object of obtaining redress at Paris, Groseilliers, when he was released from prison, took passage for France. He would have been much better off if he had swallowed his chagrin, and remained in Canada; for what with high living in Paris, and bribes about the court for the purpose of getting the ear of influential persons, Groseilliers ran through nearly all his money in half a year's time. He did not

succeed in getting anything more from the authorities than fair words and empty promises; and he came back to Canada, having nothing more to show for his journey but a new high record in the art of spending money. It must be admitted that for a French-Canadian *coureur-de-bois* to run through the greater part of $200,000 in six months argued a positive genius for extravagance.

That is the story of how Radisson and Groseilliers made and lost a fortune in furs.

Some at least of the benefit of the discoveries of Radisson and Groseilliers was reaped by the English, with whom the two bush-rangers, disgruntled at their treatment by the French authorities, took service. The Hudson's Bay Company, in fact, partly owes its origin to their initiative. The French, however, were not slow to follow up their footsteps. In 1672 Louis Joliet, the royal hydrographer of New France, was sent out by Frontenac to explore in a scientific way part of the country Radisson and Groseilliers had traversed so rapidly; and in 1673 Joliet, with a Jesuit missionary named Marquette, explored the whole of the Upper Mississippi. But the most striking of the successors of Radisson and Groseilliers was La Salle, the great French explorer who first followed the Mississippi to its mouth, and who led the way to that second colony of France in North America, Louisiana. The field of La

Salle's explorations falls outside the bounds of what is now the Dominion of Canada ; but the story of his life and death is such an epic of New France that it may fittingly be told here.

THE SEIGNEUR OF CHINA

A FEW miles above Montreal, looking out over the restless waters of the St. Lawrence, there stands to-day a little French-Canadian town named Lachine. Opposite to it, and deriving their name from it, are the famous Lachine rapids. The name Lachine is nothing more or less than the French equivalent of the English word China ; and if they were entirely consistent, English Canadians would refer to the town as Chinatown, and to the rapids as the China rapids.

Just how this curious name attached itself to the town and the rapids, one must go back into early Canadian history to explain. In the year 1666 there came out to Canada to seek his fortune a young Norman gentleman named Réné-Robert Cavelier de la Salle. From the Sulpician Fathers of Ville Marie, who owned at this time the entire island of Montreal, the young La Salle obtained the grant of a *seigneurie* opposite what was then known as the Sault St. Louis. Here, where Lachine now stands,

he built a trading-post and lived for three years, trading with the Indians. But La Salle was not the sort of man to be satisfied with a fur-trader's existence. He was a young man who saw visions and dreamed dreams. He dreamed that it was he who was going to discover the western passage to China. That will-o'-the-wisp, which glittered before Columbus and Cabot and Champlain, and which lured Hudson and Franklin and many another to their northern doom, flashed before the brain of Cavelier de la Salle. Amid the quiet life of the trading-post he grew restless. At last, in 1669, his chance seemed to have come. Two of the Sulpician fathers of Montreal, Dollier de Casson and Gallinée, with a party of twenty-two men, were setting out for the western country to establish missions among the Indians. La Salle made arrangements to go with them. He was probably at this time something of a greenhorn both in the canoe and in the bush ; and even the reverend fathers seem to have been amused at his crack-brained idea of trying to find the way to China. In a spirit of gentle sarcasm and derision, they dubbed his *seigneurie* with the name of the country which he longed to discover. It was, they doubtless said among themselves, the only China he would ever see.

They were right. Neither in 1669, nor in any subsequent year, did Cavelier de la Salle

discover the passage through to China. The expedition of 1669 came to nought, owing to a difference of opinion which split up the party when they had gone no farther than the end of Lake Ontario. But in his goings and comings between 1669 and his death in 1687, La Salle did some things scarcely less noteworthy than discovering the western passage. He was the first man to build and navigate a sailing vessel on Lake Erie; he was the first white man to follow the Mississippi to its mouth; and it was he who pointed the way for the French settlement of Louisiana later.

Few men have ever been so unlucky as La Salle. His men were always in a state of mutiny; he was always suffering shipwreck, and losing his furs; his creditors were always seizing his goods when he was away in the bush; he himself was always falling ill at the most inopportune moments. Seldom has there been a great explorer against whom fortune conspired in so cruel a manner. Yet no obstacles were too great for him to overcome. His insatiable energy and iron resolution conquered all barriers but death; and his achievements loom up the more remarkable in view of the difficulties by which he was beset.

His great achievement, of course, was the exploration of the Mississippi to its mouth in 1682. Ten years before, Joliet and Marquette

had paddled down the Mississippi, but they had gone no farther than the mouth of the Arkansas ; and it remained for La Salle, after years of fruitless effort, to plant the cross and the fleur-de-lis where the Father of Waters debouches into the Gulf of Mexico. The expedition had occupied his energies for no less than five years. In 1677 he had been forced to cross the Atlantic to Versailles in order to get the royal authority for his venture. The next year he had been compelled to spend at Fort Cataraqui (Kingston) on Lake Ontario, making preparations ; and it was only in 1679 that he actually set out. He had with him a brave Italian officer, the Chevalier de Tonti, who had joined the enterprise, and two Recollet missionaries, Father de la Ribourde and Father Membre. The party passed through the Strait of Michilimackinac in the autumn of 1679, and in midwinter reached the site of what was afterwards Fort Crèvecœur, on the Illinois River. Here La Salle left Tonti and the priests, while he returned to face his creditors at Cataraqui. In his absence the party were attacked by the Iroquois, and one of the priests killed ; and when La Salle returned to the west in the late autumn of 1681, he found his men back at Michilimackinac. Undismayed, however, by this setback, he started off once more ; on February 6 he reached the confluence of

the Illinois and the Mississippi; and by April 9 he saw opening before him the shimmering blue waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

It is probable that, when he reached the mouth of the Mississippi, La Salle saw the significance of what he had done. He was the sort of man who thought in continents. He must have seen that, by his journey, he had drawn a net about the English colonies on the Atlantic seaboard. He had hemmed them in; and if he could make good the French control of the Mississippi, there was no good reason why the vast hinterland of the English colonies should not become part of New France, or why the English in America should not eventually be driven into the sea.

The first thing to be done was obviously to garrison and colonise the mouth of the Mississippi. With this object in view, La Salle made all haste, once he had retraced his steps to Michilimackinac, to repair to the court at Versailles to induce the French government to send out a colonising expedition. He obtained audience with the son of the great Colbert, who was then in charge of colonial affairs, and succeeded in persuading him to fit out an expedition. In the spring of 1684 the expedition set out; it comprised a small fleet of no less than four vessels, and a total of two hundred and eighty colonists.

It might have seemed that at last La Salle was out of his difficulties, and on the high road to success. As a matter of fact his troubles were only begun. It was not only that the colonists sent out were criminals taken from the prisons, or vagabonds impressed on the streets : that was to be expected in a colonising expedition at that time. It was not that the soldiers were mutinous, the sailors incompetent, the pilot ignorant : La Salle had triumphed over obstacles of this sort before. It was that fortune deserted him on the very threshold of success. As luck would have it, he sailed past the entrance to the Mississippi, and landed on the coast of what is now Texas. Here the store-ship *Aimable*, on which were all the supplies of the colony, went to pieces on a reef, and nearly everything on board was lost. The other ships, with the exception of the little *Belle*, having carried out their task of transporting their passengers to the New World, returned to France ; and La Salle and his colonists were left to their own devices on that desolate shore.

La Salle, with his usual energy, set to work to bring order out of chaos. From the wreckage of the store-ship he had a fort constructed (to which he gave his favourite name of St. Louis), and he immediately sent out parties to hunt on the prairies and fish in the lagoons.

Then he set out to discover the whereabouts of the Mississippi, by means of which he hoped once more to establish communications with Canada.

But here he was doomed to disappointment. The farther he went, and the longer he searched, the more it was borne in upon him that he was nowhere in the neighbourhood of the Mississippi. It was at this juncture that he began to realise the desperate and precarious position in which he was placed. The *Belle* had been wrecked, and La Salle had no longer any means of escape by sea. His supplies were none too plentiful, and he was liable to attack at any time by the Spaniards and the Indians. It was indeed a position which might have daunted the bravest leader.

For nearly two years the colony eked out a precarious existence, while La Salle strove to locate the mouth of the Mississippi. Numbers died from illness, many were drowned, some deserted to the Indian tribes round about, some were lost in the southern wilderness. At last only about forty persons remained alive in the little fort.

Desperate situations require heroic remedies. La Salle decided that there was no alternative but for a party, led by himself, to push northward on foot to the country of the Illinois, where he expected that his friend and lieutenant,

Tonti, would be waiting for him. What he proposed was an overland journey from the Gulf of Mexico to the Great Lakes, yet there does not appear to have been any reluctance on the part of his followers to follow him. They all knew it was their only bid for safety.

On January 7, 1687, La Salle set out on his long northward march. He had with him a party of eighteen men, almost half of the surviving population of the fort. There was his brother Cavelier, who was a priest; his nephews, Moranget and Cavelier, the latter a mere lad; the Recollet friar Anastase Douay; the soldier Joutel, who was the son of La Salle's father's gardener, and who was to be the historian of the expedition; a German buccaneer named 'English Jem'; the surgeon Liotot; Nika, La Salle's Shawnee hunter; and a number of others. It was a weird and picturesque party. They were all wonderfully and fearfully clad; some in their old clothes, patched with furs and skins, others in suits made of old sailcloth. Their baggage, which was composed mainly of presents intended for the Indians through whose country they expected to pass, was borne by five horses.

What followed was pure tragedy, and reads like a page out of some *Treasure Island*. La Salle was a leader who ruled his men with a rod of iron; his great defect was a harshness toward

his subordinates which alienated their affections. For a long time there had been disaffection toward him, but it had not hitherto become open. Now, when the expedition had barely begun, it flamed out in mutiny and murder.

The cause of the outbreak was trifling. There was a dispute between Moranget, La Salle's hot-headed nephew, and a malcontent named Duhaut over the marrow bones of some buffalo killed while they were on a hunting expedition. That night Duhaut and his accomplices, 'English Jem,' the pilot Teissier, and a servant of Duhaut's named 'the Archbishop,' fell on Moranget and La Salle's two Indian servants and dispatched them in their sleep.

Having once set their hands to the plough, they could not turn back. It was clear that La Salle himself must be their next victim. He was at that moment sleeping in his camp six miles away; and the conspirators resolved to wait until the morning. In the morning, La Salle, surprised at the non-arrival of the hunters, and fearing lest something had gone astray, went out to look for them, with the friar Anastase Douay.

'All the way,' wrote the friar afterwards, 'he spoke to me of nothing but matters of piety, grace and predestination; enlarging on the debt he owed to God, who had saved him

from so many perils during more than twenty years of travel in America. Suddenly, I saw him overwhelmed with a profound sadness, for which he could not account. He was so much moved that I scarcely knew him.'

As he drew near the camp of the hunters, La Salle, with his woodsman's eye, perceived two eagles hovering and circling overhead, as though attracted by the carcasses of beasts or men. He fired his gun as a signal to any of his men who were near, and approached the camp. The first man he saw was 'the Archbishop.'

'Where is Moranget?' called out La Salle.

'He is strolling about somewhere,' replied 'the Archbishop' in a tone of studied insolence.

At that moment a tongue of flame darted forth from a bush behind which were hidden Duhaut and the surgeon Liotot. The bullet crashed into La Salle's brain; he staggered, and dropped in his tracks.

Thus died, in the forty-third year of his age, Robert Cavelier de la Salle, one of the greatest explorers of all time. He did not realise his youthful ambition of finding the passage to China; and he died an inglorious death, in the midst of failure and disappointment. But his harsh, cold, intrepid spirit had blazed out a trail where a nation in the making was to follow.

There were other murders after La Salle's. The villain Duhaut was shot down by 'English Jem,' and the surgeon was slain by a French deserter named Ruter. The remainder of the party, however, led by Joutel and Cavelier, pushed northward, and at the junction of the Arkansas and the Mississippi, they met, to their surprise and relief, the faithful Tonti and his men, who had been patiently awaiting the arrival of La Salle. As for the colonists left behind on the Texan coast, in the fort of St. Louis, they perished miserably at the hands of the Indians; and when a Spanish expedition made its way to the fort the next year, it found nothing but three unrecognisable corpses lying on the prairie. Thus ended the last venture of the Seigneur of China.

While La Salle was pushing south through the valley of the Mississippi, other Frenchmen were following up the explorations of Radisson and Groseilliers toward the north-west. Among these the most notable figure was that of Daniel de Greysolon, Sieur du L'hut, a Frenchman of gentle birth who came to Canada, engaged in the fur-trade, and about 1678 made his headquarters on the site of the present city of Fort William. In the course of his trading expeditions he explored the whole of the country west and south-west of Lake Superior, as far west as the basin of the Winnipeg River; and

it is after him that the city of Duluth takes its name. But Du L'hut was a fur-trader rather than an explorer; and it was not until nearly half a century after he went to the 'Upper Country,' as the West was then called, that any really notable strides were made in exploration in that direction. Then, in the second quarter of the eighteenth century, a French-Canadian *seigneur* named La Vérendrye, with his four heroic sons, instituted a series of explorations in the north-west which actually rolled the map back for a thousand miles. It is the story of the culminating achievement of the La Vérendryes which is the subject of the next tale.

THE SHINING MOUNTAINS

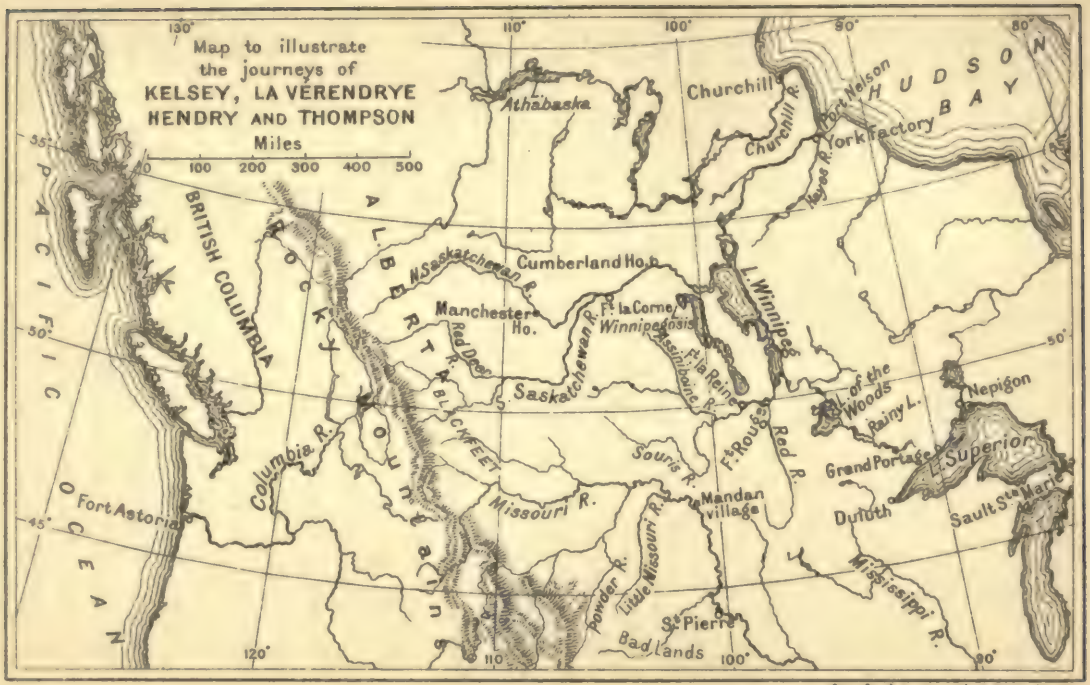
ONE Sunday, in February, 1913, a number of school children of the city of Pierre, the capital of South Dakota, were playing on a hill on the outskirts of the city, when one of them, Miss Hattie Foster, stumbled on an oblong plate of lead, the corner of which projected from the earth. The plate, which was only about eight inches wide, was dug up; and on both sides it was found to bear clearly engraved inscriptions. On the one side were stamped, with a cold die, the arms of the King of France and a Latin inscription; and on the other was scratched, evidently with the point

of a knife, a legend in French, which may be translated as follows :

PLACED HERE BY THE
CHEVALIER DE LA VÉRENDRYE.
WITNESSES : LOUIS, LA LONDETTE,
AMIOTTE
THE 30TH OF MARCH, 1743.

This little leaden plate, which had lain buried beside the Missouri River for one hundred and seventy years, was a silent but eloquent memorial of one of the most daring expeditions ever made by a Canadian explorer. The Chevalier de la Vérendrye, by whose hand the irregular lines of the inscription were probably traced, was the third son of Pierre Gaultier de Varennes, Sieur de la Vérendrye, the founder of the fur-trade on the prairies of the Canadian west. 'Louis' was the Chevalier's younger brother, Louis Joseph de la Vérendrye ; and La Londette and Amiotte were two *voyageurs* in La Vérendrye's employ. The four constituted the party that penetrated farthest west during the French régime in Canada.

The Chevalier de la Vérendrye and his younger brother had grown up in an atmosphere of exploration and discovery. Their father, the Sieur de la Vérendrye, was one of that succession of pathfinders—among whom were Cabot and Cartier, Champlain and Joliet, Radisson and La Salle—who dreamed of finding the route



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to the Western Sea. After an adventurous career as a soldier, during which he fought in the army of Louis XIV. at the battle of Malplaquet against the English, the elder La Vérendrye had settled down to the fur-trade; and in pursuit of his business, he had pushed farther and farther west, until, in 1728, he found himself at the lonely trading-post of Nepigon, on Lake Superior. Here he heard tales from the Indians about the western prairies and the great rivers that water them which piqued his curiosity, and awakened the explorer in him. Like his contemporaries, he knew that somewhere to the west lay the Pacific Ocean, and when an old Indian named Ochagach drew for him on birch bark maps of the western country which showed a river that flowed westward, his hopes of being able to reach the Pacific rose high.

La Vérendrye, however, was not the sort of person to undertake a madcap dash into the unknown. He realised that exploration in the Great West must go hand in hand with the fur-trade; and he planned to establish west of Lake Superior a chain of trading-posts which would serve as a basis for his explorations. He enlisted the support, in furtherance of this plan, of the governor of New France, the Marquis de Beauharnois; and he obtained, for the commercial end of his project, the financial

backing of some of the merchants of Quebec. These merchants took shares in La Vérendrye's venture in much the same spirit as business men to-day sometimes invest in oil prospects: they stood a chance of making vast profits, or of losing their money entirely.

Bit by bit, in the face of great obstacles and disappointments, La Vérendrye carried forward his programme. He first built a fort on Rainy Lake, then one on the Lake of the Woods, then one on Lake Winnipeg, at the mouth of the Red River. His eldest son, Jean de la Vérendrye, together with a priest and some *voyageurs*, was massacred by hostile Indians; and his nephew, the Sieur de la Jemmeraye, succumbed to the hardships of a winter expedition. But not even these catastrophes were able to daunt the discoverer's intrepid heart. He pushed up the Red River, and in 1738 established a post (later known as Fort Rouge) on the site of the present city of Winnipeg. From here he struck west, by the Assiniboine River, to what is now known as Portage la Prairie, where he built Fort La Reine. From Fort La Reine he plunged north-west to the Saskatchewan River, and south-west to the Upper Missouri; and on the banks of this latter river he came into relations with a tribe of Indians, the Mandans, who had actually heard of the Spaniards in California. Far to the

south-west, they said, on the shores of a sea that was bitter to drink, there lived a people whose skin was white, who were clad in armour, and who lived in houses built of stone.

By this time, however, the hardships through which the elder La Vérendrye had passed had begun to tell on his health. He was already over fifty-five years of age, and the trip to the Missouri had in particular tried his constitution. He therefore handed over his great mission to his sons ; and in the spring of 1742 he sent his son the Chevalier, with his youngest son Louis and two of his men, back to the Mandan villages, with instructions that they should make an attempt to reach the Western Sea.

The two young La Vérendryes were admirably equipped for their great adventure. François, the Chevalier, had a genius for learning languages : he was later reputed to be able to speak fluently seven Indian tongues, and he had also, it would appear, a working knowledge of Spanish. Louis, the younger brother, had been specially trained in map-making and geography, and, it was hoped, would be able to take observations for latitude and longitude. The party took with them an astrolabe, though this instrument was unfortunately broken at an early stage of their explorations ; and they took with them also a plentiful supply of

presents for the Indians whom they might meet. Seldom did an exploring party set out, during the French régime, so carefully chosen and so admirably outfitted as this little band of four men.

They left Fort La Reine on April 29, 1742, and reached the Mandan villages on the Upper Missouri without adventure three weeks later. From inquiries which they made among the Mandans, they came to the conclusion that their best chance of finding the way to the Spanish settlements on the Pacific coast would be to attach themselves to a tribe known as the Horsemen—probably the tribe we now know as the Cheyennes. This tribe, said the Mandans, hunted near what they described as ' the Shining Mountains ' or ' the Mountains of Bright Stones ' (that is, the snow-capped Rockies), and traded with the Spaniards on the other side of the mountains.

There was a possibility that some of the Horsemen might that summer visit the Mandan villages, and in the hope of meeting them the young Chevalier waited at the villages until nearly the end of July. But the Horsemen failed to make their appearance ; and rather than delay longer, the Frenchmen decided to set out for the Horsemen's country. They obtained two Mandan guides, and on July 23 set out fearlessly to the west through an un-

known country where no white man had preceded them.

For twenty days they pushed forward on their Indian ponies through a rolling prairie-land, and through the Bad Lands of the Little Missouri, where the Chevalier noted with curiosity the 'earths of different colours, blue, green, red, or black, white as chalk, or yellowish like ochre,' which are characteristic of this region. Finally they reached the mountains (probably the Powder River Mountains) where some of the Horsemen usually lived—only to find that they were not there. Here the Mandan guides refused to go farther, and the party was compelled to halt. One of the guides, fearful of remaining in a hostile country, actually deserted them, and fled back home.

In order to attract the attention of any passing Indians, the Chevalier had fires lit to serve as beacons, and every day either he or another of the party went up to the hills to look around. At length, after over a month of waiting, they were rewarded by seeing smoke to the south-west. This turned out to be a village of the Crow Indians, who proved very friendly, and, since the remaining Mandan guide now desired to return to the Missouri, readily agreed to supply guides to take the Chevalier and his companions to a village of the Horsemen.

Once more, then, on November 9, the explorers took to the trail, still bearing somewhat south of west. They passed through a number of villages of the Little Fox Indians, among all of whom they dispensed presents, and some of whom insisted on escorting them on their way; and in ten days they reached a village of the Horsemen. Here they met with a disappointment. The Horsemen Indians were in a state of great desolation. They had been all but wiped out by the Snake or Shoshone Indians, in one of those vendettas which the Indian tribes were constantly waging; and they were weeping and wailing and gnashing their teeth. Obviously, nothing was to be hoped for from them. They informed the Chevalier, moreover, that none of them had ever visited the Spanish settlements, as the Snake Indians barred the way. All they could do was to offer to guide him to another tribe, the Bow Indians, who were on friendly terms with the tribes that traded with the white men at the seashore, and who, on account of their valour, did not live in dread of the Snakes.

At last, on November 21, the explorers reached a great village of the Bow tribe. The chief of the Bow Indians, who received the explorers with a quite unusual display of stately courtesy, proved to be one of those 'grand old men' sometimes found among the Indians

of North America. Between him and the Chevalier de la Vérendrye there quickly sprang up a sincere friendship. 'I became greatly attached to this chief,' says the Chevalier, 'and he richly merited all our best friendship. He took so much care to teach me his language that in a very short time I was able to make myself understood and to understand him.'

One of the first questions which the Chevalier asked his new-found friend was, of course, whether he was acquainted with the white men at the sea-coast, and whether he could take them to them.

'We know them,' replied the Bow chief, 'from the stories told by the prisoners brought by the Snake Indians. The latter we shall soon meet. Do not be surprised if you see us soon joined by many other villages. Word has gone out for them to meet us. Every day you will hear the war chant. It is not without purpose. We are going to the Shining Mountains near the sea, to seek out the Snake Indians. Do not be afraid to come with us. You will be able to look upon the sea of which you are in search.'

The old chief actually repeated a number of the words used by the white men living by the sea, and the Chevalier recognised these as Spanish. He was a little disappointed to find that the sea of which he was in search was

already well known ; but he was still anxious to reach the sea overland, if it were possible. He and his companions therefore joined the Bow Indians, when they set out on the war-path ; and for many days accompanied them to the westward, being joined continually by fresh bands of Indians, who had come to join the war party.

On New Year's Day, 1743, they came at last in sight of the Shining Mountains. Another week of travelling brought them to the end of the prairies. Here the Chevalier left his younger brother in charge of the baggage at the camp, and himself pushed on with the warriors. These advanced in good order, and a day or so later entered the foothills of the Rockies, amid forests of high and heavy timber, where the Snake Indians were usually to be found.

To their consternation, however, they discovered that the villages of the Snakes were deserted. Warned of the approach of the Bow Indians, the Snakes had evidently fled. The Bows, however, were afraid that the Snakes, having discovered their approach, were making a detour to attack the villages of women and children they had left behind, and a sort of panic came over them. Despite all their chief could do, they turned, and fled back ; and the Chevalier was obliged, with the crests of the Shining Mountains looming just above him, to turn back too.

'I was exceedingly disappointed,' he says, 'not to be able to ascend the mountains as I had intended.' Perhaps he thought that, from the crest of the mountains, he would be able to see the Pacific Ocean. Certainly, he did not know that between the mountains and the sea there still lay some hundreds of miles of difficult country. But if he did not succeed in his ambition of reaching the sea, he had at least succeeded in doing what no white man had done before him, crossing the heart of the North American continent and reaching the mighty ridge which divides the prairies from the Pacific slope. That alone was an achievement which, in itself, entitled him to an immortality of fame.

The return journey was made in helter skelter confusion. At one time the Frenchmen became separated from their Indian allies, and only came up with them again by accident. Finally they reached the Missouri, though much farther south than the point from which they had set out; and then they made their way north by gradual stages, passing through several new tribes. At last, after various adventures, they reached once again Fort la Reine at Portage la Prairie on July 2, 1843, having been absent practically a year and three months. Needless to say, they were welcomed with great joy and relief by the Sieur de la Vérendrye, who had almost given them up for lost.

Before they left the Missouri, however, the Chevalier took the trouble to build a cairn of stones on a hill on the banks of the river, and to bury there, unknown to the Indians, a leaden plate bearing the arms of the King of France, and an inscription containing his name and the names of his companions. That is how, one February Sunday, one hundred and seventy years later, little Miss Hattie Foster, of Pierre, South Dakota, happened to find the leaden tablet described above.

In the search for the Western Sea, the explorers of Canada followed two routes. The French followed the route of the St. Lawrence valley and the Great Lakes ; the English, farther north, followed the route through Hudson Strait and Hudson Bay. By the end of the French régime, the French had reached the Rocky Mountains, while the English were still sitting tight on the shores of Hudson Bay. But by this time the English had been in Hudson Bay for a century and a half. They had entered the Bay in 1610, before Champlain had even begun his explorations in what is now the province of Ontario. Having completed our survey of the work of the French explorers, we must now turn back and trace the work of the English explorers farther north ; and first of all we come upon the story of the discovery of Hudson Bay by Henry Hudson—one of the most moving episodes in the whole of Canadian history.

MUTINEERS AND CASTAWAYS

ONE September morning in the year 1611 the master of a fishing smack off the west coast of Ireland spied on the horizon what looked like a derelict ship. He put the helm about, and as he drew nearer he saw that the sails of the ship were flapping to the wind in tatters. Splintered yardarms hung in the ragged rigging, and a mast was snapped off short.

The ship proved to be the bark *Discovery*, master, Henry Hudson, belonging to three members of the Muscovy Company of England. It was manned by only three men, all of whom were so weak from starvation and hardships that they could scarcely stand at the helm. There was no sign of either the master or the mate of the ship, and the man who seemed to have assumed command described himself as Abacuk Prickett, agent and servant of Sir Dudley Digges, one of the owners.

The story which Abacuk Prickett had to tell was so extraordinary that the fishermen, who were not ignorant of the strange things which happened on the high seas in those times, could not help looking at him and his companions askance. They gave him some provisions and supplied a pilot and crew to take the ship into

Plymouth Harbour; but when they reached Plymouth they handed over Prickett and the others to the authorities, and had them clapped in Plymouth jail, until they could give a satisfactory account of themselves.

When Prickett had sufficiently recovered from his privations, he set down in writing his account of the voyage of the *Discovery*. This account, which has come down to us, and which may be perused by any one taking the trouble to examine it, reads like a tale of piracy in the South Sea. Checked by the ship's logs, part of which has been preserved, the story runs somewhat as follows:

The *Discovery* had left the Thames on April 17 of the previous year, with a crew of twenty men. It had been under the command of a master mariner named Henry Hudson, who had been engaged by Sir Dudley Digges and two other members of the Muscovy Company of London, to search for a north-western passage to China. Hudson had already made several attempts to reach China by way of the Arctic Ocean; in 1607 and in 1608 he had endeavoured to discover a north-eastern passage to China by way of Spitzbergen, but had been turned back by the ice at a distance of only eight degrees from the North Pole. In 1609 he had, in an attempt to find a western passage, tried to penetrate the American continent; he had entered, first of

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white men, what is now the harbour of New York, and he had explored the Hudson River. Having satisfied himself that America was an inseparable barrier to a western passage, he had decided in the spring of 1610 to discover whether a passage to China could not be discovered to the north of the American continent. He set out with the idea which has since his time lured so many other dauntless mariners to their fate, the idea of a north-west passage to China.

Hudson had with him his mate, Juet, who had been with him the year before on his expedition to the Hudson River. He had his young son, and his secretary, Henry Greene, a ragamuffin whom Hudson had picked up off the streets of London. Representing the owners there were Abacuk Prickett, a servant of Sir Dudley Digges, and one Coleburne, who was sent as official adviser to the expedition. Coleburne's advice, however, proved so unacceptable to the tyrannical old sea-dog who was master of the ship that he was packed off home on the first craft that offered. The rest of the crew were the usual off-scourings of the port of London, many of them impressed against their will.

It is obvious that Hudson did not take his crew into his confidence regarding the destination of the trip. They seem to have been under the impression that they were going to repeat their voyage of the previous year to the pleasant

land about the Hudson River. When, therefore, they sailed north to Iceland, and thence beat up toward Greenland, there was open murmuring among the crew. Even the mate grumbled and swore with many nautical oaths that 'there would be bloodshed if the master persisted in going by Greenland.'

Henry Hudson, however, believed in being master on his own ship, and he paid no more attention to the murmurings of his men than if they had been the murmurings of the waves. Behind and beyond the jutting promontories of Greenland, he believed, lay the goal on which for years his hopes had been set—the passage to the South Sea and to China.

He held on his way, and by the end of July had rounded Cape Farewell, at the south end of Greenland, and had entered what is to-day known, after him, as Hudson Strait. This is, perhaps, the most terrible and dangerous stretch of water in the world. Here for four hundred miles the vast icefields of the Arctic Ocean are crushed into a narrow passage less than fifty miles wide at each end. Against this ice-jam the Atlantic tide dashes itself in that 'furious overfall' which has ever been a nightmare of northern navigators—a cataract of waters thirty feet high flinging itself against the southward flow of the ice.

Notwithstanding the advance in the science of

navigation, these straits are passable, even to-day, only by specially constructed ships and at certain times of the year. Hudson's *Discovery* was a frail little wooden bark, which the ice would crack like an egg-shell. Yet the fearless old mariner does not seem to have thought of turning back. By means of a small sail and a constant use of grappling-irons Hudson literally wormed his way through the ice-floes until he reached Ungava Bay, part way through the strait.

Here he came nearest to extinction. It seemed as though there were no escape from the merciless ice-floes that pressed on every side. An island of ice near the *Discovery* turned turtle, and there was an avalanche of falling seas. Some of the men, says Prickett, were sick with fear. Henry Greene, Hudson's secretary, led the men to the master and begged him to turn back. As Hudson reasoned with them there was a rift in the ice. The rift widened to a channel. There came a spurt of wind, and the *Discovery* sailed into open water. Beyond this open water there appeared in due course a vast sea.

As Hudson saw for the first time what are now the waters of Hudson Bay, his heart must have leapt with exultation. He had apparently no doubt that he had at last come upon the South Sea, and that he had only to sail south-west until he came to China.

He was, of course, bound to be bitterly disappointed. As he sailed south, it became obvious that he was in a great land-locked sea, and not in the Pacific at all. When the crew realised this fact Hudson had a mutiny on his hands. Juet, the old mate, threw down his boat-hook and refused to serve longer. He pointed out that unless they turned back immediately they would find Hudson Strait closed to them, and they would be compelled to winter in Hudson Bay with only a few months' provisions in the hold. Hudson, however, was adamant. He was confident they would find the way through to Asia and he would not turn back. He tried Juet for mutiny, deposed him with loss of wages, and put a sailor named Robert Bylot in his place.

With a crew on the verge of mutiny, Hudson made his way down to that southern arm of Hudson Bay which is called, after a later explorer, James Bay ; and there, in the month of November, he was caught by the terrible northern winter.

The ice closed in around the ship. The thermometer sank below zero. Stone fireplaces had to be built on the decks of the ship, and pans of shot heated red-hot taken to the berths as warming-pans. All over the ship the hoar-frost lay an inch thick.

It might have been expected that men thus

circumstanced would have forgotten their differences; but such was not the case. Mutiny was still in the air. It was only by threatening to hang the mutineers at the yardarm, or maroon them on a barren island, that Hudson was able to get obedience at all. It was with the greatest difficulty that some of the men could be induced to go hunting, and, naturally, the supplies fell very low. By the spring Hudson had distributed to the crew the last pound of bread and cheese, except for a reserve store of provisions for fourteen days, which he had locked in his cabin.

No sooner had Hudson started on his return trip in the early summer than mutiny broke out. It was clear to every one that there was not food enough to go round. Hudson had been responsible for the perilous situation in which they were; he, the mutineers agreed, should be sacrificed first. There were also nine of the men ill in their berths; they were of no use, and might as well be sacrificed too. The chief conspirator was Juet, the deposed mate, and he was joined by Greene, Hudson's secretary, who now turned on the hand that had fed him.

One night Greene came into the cabin of Abacuk Prickett, who had acted as a sort of agent for the ship's owners, and unfolded his plan. Vowing that he would cut the throat of

any man that betrayed him, he swore with many imprecations :

'I am going to end it or mend it—go through with it or die. The sick men are useless. There are provisions for half the crew, but not all——'

Prickett stopped him. 'This is mutiny,' he said, 'and mutiny is punished in England by the gallows.'

'By heaven,' swore Greene, 'I would rather be hanged at home than starve at sea.'

In the end Prickett allowed himself to be persuaded. He could not save Hudson, and to save his own neck he kept quiet. The mutineers promised him that he would be spared on condition that he agreed to intercede for them with Sir Dudley Digges, his master. In vain Prickett pleaded for Hudson's life. The mutineers had made up their minds, and they were determined to go through with the business while their blood was up.

That night was black and windy. Throughout its long hours the mutineers kept watch and ward. At daybreak three stationed themselves outside Hudson's cabin. As the master came out in the early morning they leapt upon him, and bore him down. Once they had overpowered him they bound his arms behind his back and gathered round him, jeering at and cursing him. The eight sick men were tumbled out of their berths and hustled on deck. The

shallop was lowered over the side, and Hudson, with his son and the eight sick men, were bundled into it. One man, a sailor from Ipswich, was given the chance of remaining on board. He chose to go in the shallop with his master. His name was Philip Staffe.

The mutineers then hoisted the sails of the *Discovery*. As these filled with the wind, the tow-rope by which the shallop was attached to the stern tightened. For a moment or so the tiny craft breasted the waves gallantly, then the tow-rope parted and the castaways were adrift.

As Prickett looked out of his cabin window he saw Hudson sitting in the shallop with bound arms and angry, panic-stricken face. He caught a curse which the old sea-dog sent after his traitorous crew.

'Juet,' he cried, 'will ruin you all.'

'Nay,' shouted Prickett, 'it is that villain Henry Greene.'

The distance between the two boats widened. The shallop fell away, first out of earshot, then out of sight. When last seen the castaways had their oars going and their sail spread, and they were coming on after the *Discovery*, as if in mad pursuit.

The mutineers crowded on all sail, and stood away for Hudson Strait. Here they felt the need of their old master's skill and knowledge.

They missed the entrance to the strait, they lost themselves in fog, they ran on rocks and icebergs. Henry Greene and four others were murdered by Eskimos on the way through the strait. The remaining four continued their course alone. By the time they had reached the eastern end of the strait they were reduced to a ration of half a bird a day. Half-way across the Atlantic they were eating the refuse of the cook's barrel. In actual sight of Ireland, one of the four, the ex-mate Juet, died of starvation.

Prickett and the other survivors reached Plymouth. Why they were not all promptly hanged there is one of the enigmas of British justice. Possibly it was thought they had already suffered enough ; possibly those who knew that domineering old sailor, Henry Hudson, felt they may have been justified in their mutiny.

The next spring a search expedition was sent out for Hudson under the command of Sir Thomas Button. Button carefully explored Hudson Bay, but found no traces of the castaways. The fate of Hudson is one of the mysteries of the sea. Did he attempt to penetrate the strait, and there perish in the ice, or at the hands of the Eskimos, or did he turn back into Hudson Bay and attempt to eke out an existence on the shores ? The question is one without an answer, the mystery one without a clue.

Henry Hudson was soon followed by others. The exploits of almost every one of these explorers would furnish a tale by itself; but especial interest perhaps attaches to the adventures of a Danish sea-captain named Munk, who visited Hudson Bay in 1619.

THE RIVER OF THE STRANGERS

IN the early summer of 1620, as was their annual custom, the Indians came down to the shores of Hudson Bay. At the mouth of what is now known as Churchill River, they came across something the like of which they had never seen before. On the shore they found the corpses of a strange race and the clothes in which they had clad themselves. And when the tide went out, they beheld to their astonishment, in the natural harbour formed at the mouth of the river, a sunken ship of what seemed to them portentous proportions. Making a timid advance, they ventured to board the vessel; and what was their wonder and delight when they found it was stocked with plunder. Clothes of brilliant colours, mirrors, and trinkets, steel axes and weapons, together with a multitude of other articles, the use of which baffled their intelligence, were theirs only for the taking. In the seventh heaven of delight, they transported their plunder to the

shore and proceeded to dry it above their fires. Little did they know the fate in store for them. Among the booty which they had carried ashore were several kegs of gunpowder. Perhaps some luckless savage thought these needed drying out; perhaps a spark from the campfire fell upon them. Whatever the cause, the kegs of gunpowder exploded, and half the plunderers were blown into eternity. In terror and trembling the rest of the Indians beat a hasty retreat; and for many a long year after, the mouth of Churchill River passed among them by the ominous name of River-of-the-Strangers.

Eighty years afterwards, when the Hudson's Bay Company traders came to Churchill to build a fort, they found imbedded in the river flats several brass cannon bearing stamped upon them the cryptic letters 'C4.'

The solution of the mystery of who those strangers were who left behind them a sunken ship and kegs of gunpowder and brass cannon, is to be found in the journals of a captain of the Danish Royal Navy, named Jens Munk, which may be seen by any one who cares to examine them in the publications of the Hakluyt Society.

Captain Jens Munk had a career which was adventurous, even in the adventurous times in which he lived. He was the son of a Danish

nobleman, but when he was still a child his father had been imprisoned by the King for misappropriation of public funds, and while in prison had committed suicide. At the age of twelve years Jens Munk had been thrown on the cold world. He promptly took service as ship's boy on board a Dutch merchant vessel, bound for South America. Off the coast of Brazil the vessel on which he was was attacked by the French and sunk. The young Danish lad was one of the few who escaped. He plunged into the water, and, clinging to bits of wreckage, succeeded after some effort in swimming ashore in the dark.

In the town of Bahia, to which the lad made his way, he succeeded in earning a livelihood by turning his hand to any trade that offered. For a time he was a cobbler's apprentice, and then he served as the apprentice of a house painter. Incidentally, he picked up a fair knowledge of Spanish and Portuguese.

When he was eighteen years of age he escaped in a Dutch ship which had come into Bahia, and returned in it to Europe. Here he resumed again the life of the sea, sailing in all manner of ships to all manner of ports. Within five years of his return to Europe he was commanding his own ship; we find him sailing on his own account to Iceland, to Nova Zembla, to Russia. His ability was such that it attracted the atten-

tion of the Danish government, and they offered him a post in the Danish Royal Navy.

King Christian of Denmark was a ruler who was interested in the exploration of the New World. The other countries of Europe were founding colonies beyond the sea, and he was anxious to do the same. He had heard with interest of the English sailors, who had, in 1610, penetrated to Hudson Bay, and he decided to send out an expedition to spy out the possibilities of colonisation there. When he looked about for a sailor to command the expedition, he could find no better man than Captain Jens Munk.

Munk set out from Copenhagen for Hudson Bay on Sunday, May 16, 1619. He had two ships, the frigate *Unicorn*, with a crew of forty-eight men, and the sloop *Lamprey*, with a crew of sixteen men. The expedition was fitted out with the greatest care ; King Christian himself had supervised the preparations. For instance, Munk had with him a chaplain and two surgeons, luxuries which most explorers in those days went without. It must be confessed, however, that neither of these luxuries did Munk and his men much good in Hudson Bay.

The story of the expedition, as set down by Munk in his journal day by day, in a dry, laconic style, affords as heartrending a record as any page in the annals of exploration. The

passage from Norway to Greenland was made in an astonishingly short time, but in Hudson Strait Munk's troubles began. The inexorable ice-floes hemmed in his ships, and threatened a dozen times to crush them into match-wood. Time and again Munk was compelled to take refuge in the shelter of the north shore. It took him six weeks to make the passage of the strait, where the fur-trade captains of later times used to take a week.

In Hudson Bay a heavy gale was blowing. In a hurricane of sleet the ships parted company; and Munk, in the *Unicorn*, was driven before the wind clean across the Bay. There are not many good harbours in Hudson Bay, but, as luck would have it, the storm drove the *Unicorn* straight as an arrow into the best harbour on the whole coast, the harbour at the mouth of Churchill River. Four days later the little *Lamprey* appeared on the horizon, and in answer to the beacons of driftwood built by Munk's men, took refuge also within the river's mouth.

It was only the beginning of September when Munk reached Churchill harbour, but already the northern winter was beginning to settle down. The thermometer had dropped, and snow was beginning to fly, in small, stinging particles. Ice-pans were beginning to heap themselves up on the shore. It became clear

to Munk that no time should be lost in getting into winter quarters; and since the harbour into which he had been blown served his purpose admirably, he decided to winter there. He moved farther up the river to a place which still bears the name of Munk's Cove.

The crews had barely time to build breakwaters of logs and stones about the ships, to protect them from the ice-jam in the spring, when the winter fell. Ice formed in the harbour. The mercury sank below zero. The snow began to fall in blinding and inexhaustible eddies. Used as they were to the mild and humid atmosphere of Denmark, the explorers were aghast at the intensity of the cold that settled down upon them. They had never dreamed of anything like it. Glass beer bottles and medicine bottles went off in loud explosions, shivered into atoms by the cold. Wine kegs were frozen solid, and burst the hoops that bound them. The nights were broken by the detonations of the frost, as great rocks were split in twain.

Munk and his men were not prepared for such a climate. They had no furs, and no overabundance of clothes. The only fires they had were those they made in open stone fireplaces built on deck. To warm their bunks they were compelled to use shot heated red-hot as warming-pans. Instead of taking exer-

cise on shore, they hung about the fire-places, or took refuge in their bunks. 'One of my surgeons,' says Munk, under date of December 12, 'died, and his corpse had to remain unburied for two days, because the frost was so terrible that no one dared go on shore.'

The inevitable result of this kind of life was that illness broke out among the crews. Lack of fresh meat and vegetables, combined with a sedentary life, brought on the dreaded scurvy. On January 10, Munk writes in his journal, 'The priest and the other surgeon took to their beds. A violent sickness rages among the men. My head cook died.'

Eleven days later, on January 21, there is a pathetic entry. 'I asked the surgeon, who was lying mortally ill,' writes Munk, 'whether any remedy might be found in his chest. He answered that he had used as many remedies as he knew, and if God would not help, there was no remedy.'

On January 23 the mate died. The minute guns discharged in honour of his burial were so brittle from the frost that they exploded. By February 17 there had been twenty deaths, and only seven men remained well and able to work. On February 20 the priest died.

By the end of March, Munk is forced to write, 'I am like a lonely wild bird, running to and fro waiting on the sick. . . . Not one

of us is well enough to fetch water and fuel.' On Good Friday there were only four men, beside Munk himself, able to sit up and listen to the sermon which Munk read. By May 6 there is the ominous entry, 'The bodies of the dead lie uncovered because none of us has strength to bury them.'

In June, Munk himself, the last to give in, collapsed. The ship had become a pest-house. On the floor beside the captain's berth lay the body of the cook's boy. In the bunks were three other corpses. On deck were some more. 'Nobody,' says Munk, 'had strength to throw them overboard.'

For four days Munk lay in his bunk without a bite of food. As he felt his strength ebbing away, he traced in his journal what he thought were his last words :

'As I have now no more hope of life in this world, I request, for the sake of God, if any Christians should happen to come here, they will bury my poor body together with the others found, and this my journal forward to the king. . . . Herewith, good-night to all the world, and my soul to God.'

Having written these words, Jens Munk crawled to the deck for a last look at the shore. As he pulled himself painfully up to the bulwark, he was surprised to see the figures of two men standing on the shore. They were two of the

men who had crawled ashore one evening at ebb tide, and had not hitherto had the strength to return. When they saw him they came over the river flats (for the tide was out), and, with great difficulty, helped him down the ship's ladder.

The three men built a fire of driftwood on shore, partly to keep themselves warm, and partly to keep the wolves away. They had no provisions, but they ate what roots and weeds and grasses were at hand. This, as it happened, was the best thing they could have done. Scurvy is caused by lack of fresh food, and green sprouts were the best remedy they could have hit upon. From the moment they began to eat green food, they began to recover.

By the end of June their strength was sufficiently revived to enable them to rig up the little *Lamprey*. They threw out all the ballast, and at high tide the sloop floated free of the breakwater which had been built about it. The *Unicorn* Munk and his companions sank, by drilling holes in her hull, in the hope that they might be able to return with a crew and raise her again.

'On July 16,' writes Munk in the journal, 'in the afternoon, we set sail from there in the name of God.' Three emaciated men, weakened by hunger and hardships unspeakable, were all the crew that manned the sloop. But they were men who had cheated death once, and

they were ready to cheat death again. Halfway across the bay the rudder of the *Lamprey* broke, and Munk had to moor the ship to an ice-floe and drift with the wind. Fortunately the wind drove him clear into Hudson Strait. Here he mended the rudder and worked his way through the ice. Outside the strait he encountered a gale in the Atlantic, 'such as would blow a man off his legs.' As he passed the islands of Shetland the seas were so heavy that he did not dare to land. But he won safely through, and on September 20 the little *Lamprey* ploughed its way through the foam into one of the fjords of Norway. With the help of a peasant, Munk and his companions moored the ship; and then they fell on their knees, thanking God for their deliverance from 'icebergs and dreadful storms and foaming seas.'

This is how it came about that the Indians called Churchill River the River of the Strangers, and that the Hudson Bay traders found cannon at Churchill Factory stamped with the mystic letters 'C4.' The strangers were the corpses of Captain Munk's men, and the cannon belonged to Captain Munk's sovereign, King Christian IV. of Denmark.

The disappointment felt in discovering that Hudson Bay was a land-locked sea and did not lead to the Western Ocean, halted exploration

in that direction for many years ; and it was not until the Hudson's Bay Company was formed in 1670, and the fur-trade organised on the shores of the Bay, that further progress became possible. The story of the foundation of the Hudson's Bay Company—a story in which our old friends Radisson and Groseilliers played a leading part—has been often told ; but perhaps it will bear telling again.

MR. RADISHES AND MR. GOOSEBERRY

IT was the year of the great plague in London. His Majesty King Charles the Second had taken refuge, together with all his court, in the ancient university town of Oxford, and was there transacting the business of state. To Oxford there came one day, to have audience with the King, a gentleman named Sir George Carterett. Sir George Carterett had just returned from America, where he had been sent as one of His Majesty's Commissioners to inquire into the affairs of His Majesty's American colonies. He had brought back with him from Boston two French-Canadian *coureurs-de-bois*, whose names were Pierre Esprit Radisson and Médard Chouart des Groseilliers (or, as the English called them, 'Mr. Radishes and Mr. Gooseberry'). Thinking that Charles might be

interested in the marvellous story which these men had to tell, Sir George asked for an audience for them; and Charles, who seemed greatly interested by what he heard about them, granted it.

The meeting, which took place in Oxford one autumn day of 1665, between King Charles and the two French-Canadians, must have been a dramatic subject for the artist's brush. On the one hand, there was the merry monarch himself, with his perfumed curls and gay clothes and graceful manners. Beside him was probably his uncle, Prince Rupert, the dashing adventurer who had been cavalry officer, pirate, and politician in turn. On the other hand were Mr. Radishes and Mr. Gooseberry, the two fur-traders who had penetrated farther than any other white men into the interior of North America, and who had made and lost a fortune by the way. Radisson was young and smooth-faced, lithe as a panther; Groseilliers was middle-aged and heavily bearded, and burnt black with the sun and wind of the wilds. They both doubtless looked and felt uncouth in their court clothes.

The story which Radisson poured out before the ears of the King and Prince Rupert was one of thrilling interest. He told how he and his brother-in-law, Groseilliers, had penetrated far into unexplored territory to the west of

New France ; how they had heard there of the Bay of the North, to which the Indians went down in the summer ; and how they had actually reached, by an overland route, that great Bay in which, half a century before, Henry Hudson had lost his life. He described the vast cargoes of furs which they had obtained there, six hundred thousand peltries in all, worth fabulous sums of money. He told how on their return to New France, they had been plundered by the governor, under the pretence of fining them for trading without a licence ; how they had tried in vain to obtain redress at Paris ; how they had fitted out an expedition of their own at Port Royal, for the purpose of trading in Hudson Bay ; how the expedition had been turned back by the ice at Hudson Strait ; and how, at last, when their hopes and patience were at the lowest ebb, they had met in Boston Sir George Carterett, the Royal Commissioner to America, who had induced them to return with him to England.

Throughout the narrative, it was clear that Radisson and Groseilliers were so disgusted with the treatment which had been meted out to them in Quebec and in Paris, that they were ready and willing to take service under the English.

One does not as a rule think of Charles the Second as a company promoter, but he was a

shrewd business man, with a keen eye for the main chance. He saw the possibilities of exploiting the fur-trade in Hudson Bay, and he attached the two Canadians to his court. At the moment, owing to the plague, the great fire in London, and the war with the Dutch, he was not in a position to fit out an expedition. But as soon as possible he gave orders to the Admiralty to hand over to the adventurers the ship *Eaglet* for the purpose of making an expedition to Hudson Bay, and trading in and exploring that region. The cost of the expedition was to be borne by Prince Rupert and half a dozen members of the court, who had sufficient business foresight to see the prospect of large dividends in return. These men were the nucleus out of which later the great Hudson's Bay Company developed.

The expedition set sail in the spring of 1668. In addition to the *Eaglet*, under Captain Stannard, the adventurers were given the *Nonsuch*, commanded by Captain Gillam, of Boston. Radisson was to sail on board the first, Groseilliers on board the latter ; and the captains were to take their orders from them. The instructions which were issued to the captains are still to be seen in Hudson's Bay House, London ; they conclude thus :

' Lastly wee advise and require you to use the said Mr. Gooseberry and Mr. Radisson with

all manner of civility and courtesy, and to take care that all your company doe bear a particular respect unto them, they being the persons upon whose credit wee have undertaken this expedition.

'Which wee beseech Almighty God to prosper.

(Signed) RUPERT, ALBEMARLE,
CRAVEN, G. CARTERETT,
J. HAYES, P. COLLETON.'

In mid-Atlantic the two ships encountered heavy gales. Mountainous combers threatened at every minute to inundate them; and they tossed about, with hatches battened down, like helpless derelicts. In the storm they were driven far apart. The smaller vessel, the *Nonsuch*, with Groseilliers on board, weathered the gale, and proceeded on its way to Hudson Strait. But Radisson's ship, the *Eaglet*, was so badly battered that it was forced to put about, and crawl in a disabled condition back to London Port.

It must have been a sore trial to the eager and irrepressible Radisson to be driven back to England. For all he knew, his brother-in-law Groseilliers might have gone to the bottom of the sea, and in that case the expedition would have proved a hopeless failure. Radisson, however, philosophically occupied himself in the

winter of 1668-69 in making preparations for a new venture, and in writing an account of his former journeys of discovery, the account which, written in the curious and obscure English Radisson had picked up since he reached England, came to light only a few years ago.

In the spring of 1669, Radisson made a second attempt to reach Hudson Strait; but the vessel which he had been given, the *Wavero*, proved unseaworthy, and he was again compelled to turn back. What was his delight, however, on sailing up the Thames, to find tied up to the dock the little *Nonsuch*, with Groseilliers and Gillam on board. Groseilliers had wintered in Hudson Bay, had explored the greater part of the coastline, had found the Ojibway encampments, and had done a roaring trade with them in furs. The hold of the little ship was filled with the precious bundles of pelts; Prince Rupert and the other gentlemen adventurers were highly delighted with the success of the expedition; and Radisson found that, in spite of the ill-luck which had dogged him, he was at last on the high road to fortune.

Once the possibilities of the fur-trade in Hudson Bay had been demonstrated, Prince Rupert and his friends applied themselves to obtaining a charter from the King. This charter they obtained in the year 1670. It incorporated a new company entitled 'The Governor

and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay,' and it granted this company 'the whole trade and commerce of all those seas, straits, bays, rivers, creeks and sounds in whatsoever latitude that lie within the entrance of the straits called Hudson's Straits, together with all the lands, countries and territories upon the coasts and confines of the seas, straits, bays, lakes, rivers, creeks, and sounds not now actually possessed by the subjects of any other Christian state.' This meant that the new company was to have sovereignty over all those lands watered by the rivers flowing into Hudson Bay, from Labrador on the east to the Rocky Mountains on the west.

Thus was born the most prosperous chartered company which the world has seen, a company that ruled nearly half a continent for two hundred years, and that during nearly all that time paid dividends beside which even the marvels of modern finance pale into insignificance.

In June, 1670, Radisson and Groseilliers set sail once more for Hudson Bay, with three ships chartered by the company. For two or three years they laboured at establishing the company on the shores of the Bay ; they built forts, and worked up the trade with the Indians, and in general spied out the land. The two brothers-in-law, however, were better bush-

whackers than they were business men. They had come out to the Bay without any definite understanding or contract with the company; and when they returned to England they found that the company was not disposed to treat them as liberally as they thought they had a right to expect. They had probably expected to be made partners, and given shares in the company for their part in founding it; they had expected, as we should say to-day, to be given watered stock. But the company was not disposed to grant them anything more than an annual allowance of £100. This meant that they were to be servants, and not partners, in the company.

The high-spirited French-Canadians, who had blazed out the trails of an empire's commerce, bore grievously this ungrateful treatment. They realised that they had been duped. Now that the company had no further necessity for their services, it was no longer disposed to treat them with the same consideration as before. It was while they were in this frame of mind that an offer came to them from the great French minister, Colbert, inviting them to return to the allegiance of France. They accepted the invitation with alacrity; and from 1674 to 1682, they had the pleasure and satisfaction of playing havoc with the trade of the English in Hudson Bay. In the latter year, Radisson

actually captured the most northern and most profitable of the English trading-posts, that which he himself had founded at Nelson River.

These depredations, however, got Radisson into trouble with the French government, which at that moment was anxious for diplomatic reasons to conciliate England. He became entangled, as it were, in the meshes of European diplomacy. At the same time, attempts were made on the part of the English to induce Radisson and Groseilliers to return to London. The Company of Gentlemen Adventurers had found out to their cost that it was better to have Radisson as a friend than as an enemy. They held out, therefore, considerable inducements to him, and in 1683 he once more changed his allegiance, and returned to England. Groseilliers, by this time growing an old man, declined to follow his brother-in-law, and returned to New France, where he died thirteen years later among the humble habitants from whom he was sprung.

On his return to London, Radisson was at first royally treated. The Adventurers presented him with a purse of gold 'for his extraordinary services to their great liking and satisfaction.' A merchant was ordered 'to keep Mr. Radisson in stock of fresh provisions,' another dealer was ordered to supply him with 'a hogshead of claret.' The Secretary of the Committee begged him to accept a silver tankard

(costing, by the account books, £10 4s.) as a token of their esteem. He was able to set up house near Tower Street, in one of the fashionable quarters of London at that day. About him lived the merchant princes who held stock in the Hudson's Bay Company, and only a few doors away lived the famous Samuel Pepys, the gentleman in whose collection of manuscripts Radisson's journals were found. So far as it is possible to estimate his income, Radisson must at this time have been in receipt of £200 a year, which went farther and was worth more then than it would be now.

But with the Revolution of 1688 a change took place in Radisson's fortunes. The departure of the Stuarts from England brought about a transformation in the Hudson's Bay Company. The names of the shareholders changed; of Radisson's old friends, hardly one remained. At the same time, the company fell on evil days. The French were once more raiding the Bay, and cutting off the furs. The dividends, which had been as high as 50 per cent. per annum, dropped to nothing. The company had to retrench.

They started by cutting Radisson's pension in two. One or two of the old shareholders protested; but the new shareholders knew not Joseph, and paid no attention to the protest. Radisson, now growing an old man, was forced

to file a suit against them in Chancery, and petition Parliament for redress. From his petition it is clear that he had been reduced to destitution; he was living in the Parish of St. James 'in a low and mean condition,' and in fear lest his family should be driven to the poorhouse. He won his suit, but never again did prosperity shine upon him. Toward the end of his life, we find him petitioning the Company to be made the warehouse keeper of their London premises. To the eternal shame of the Hudson's Bay Company this petition was refused. The last instalment of Radisson's pension was paid him on March 29, 1710. Sometime between this date and the beginning of July, 1710, the old fur-trader passed down the long trail. With his death there ceased to beat one of the most daring and ingenious hearts of the seventeenth century.

Strangely enough, the names of the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company do not occupy high places in the honour roll of Canadian exploration. For many years after its formation the company was content to limit its operations to the shore of the Bay, and to trade with the Indians that happened to come down there in the summer. Not only was exploration inland not encouraged; it was actually forbidden. But about the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century, the com-

pany was roused from its sleep on the Hudson Bay littoral, first of all by the inroads of the French into the Bay itself, and in the second place by the arrival of French fur-traders in the prairie country. The latter soon cut off the trade of the English at its source, and compelled the company to send its men inland to found posts and renew relations with the natives.

THE EXPLORATIONS OF A STREET-ARAB

THE first of the Hudson's Bay Company explorers to reach the western prairies was a youth named Henry Kelsey. Henry Kelsey, before he became apprenticed to the company, had been a ragamuffin street-arab of London. He had grown up under the shadow of the gay and dissolute court of Charles the Second, a little waif of humanity living in the gutters and on the wharves. How he came to be apprenticed to the company, we do not know. It was not easy for the company to get men to expatriate themselves on the inhospitable shores of Hudson Bay, and young Kelsey may have been impressed, as one of the Hudson's Bay Company ships was setting sail in the Port of London; or his relatives may have bound him over as an apprentice to the company to get rid of him.

He first appears, after his arrival at Port Nelson, in Hudson Bay, in the year 1688. Instructions were sent in that year to Governor Geyer, of Port Nelson, to send 'the boy, Henry Kelsey' to Churchill River, 'because, we are informed, he is a very active lad, delighting much in Indians' company, being never better pleased than when he is travelling amongst them.' This entry in the records of the Hudson's Bay Company is more remarkable than might at first appear. In 1688 there was no Hudson's Bay Company post at Churchill River, and Henry Kelsey was evidently to be sent up there to induce the northern Indians—probably the Chippewyans—to come down to Port Nelson to trade. The Gentlemen Adventurers apparently considered that the lively and mischievous little London street-arab, whom they had sent out a few years before, had shown such an aptitude for getting on with the Indians, and for learning their language, that he should be given every opportunity for using his talents in that direction.

It is to be presumed (though we have no direct evidence of the fact) that Kelsey was sent off to Churchill River, and established relations with the Indians there. Guttersnipe as he was, reared under the shadow of the great St. Paul's, one can imagine the perennial delight and interest he must have taken in the

life of the bush, in the wood-craft of the Indians, and in the tales told by the old men of the tribe over the camp fire at night.

The freedom of the forest life, however, in one sense did him no good. When he returned to Fort Nelson, he began to find the strict discipline of the fort most irksome. The martinet rule of the Hudson's Bay Company governors at that time was rigid almost beyond belief. Only the governor and the chief trader were, as a rule, allowed to converse with the Indians. No servant of the company was allowed to leave the fort to hunt except with special permission, and under parole. The head officials exacted from their subordinates implicit obedience ; and no junior was permitted to address his seniors unless spoken to. The walls were plastered with rules and regulations ; and any infraction of these rules was rewarded with detention in the guard-room, or with corporal punishment. The governor, with his uniform of red and gold, and his cocked hat and lace ruffles, was a little despot within his wilderness stronghold.

The little London ragamuffin, who had tasted the pleasure of free life once, refused to submit to the discipline of the fort, and proceeded to break all rules, regardless of the consequences. He went in and out of the gates without leave ; and when the gates were closed, he climbed the

walls. Just when he was needed in the fort, it was often found that he had run away with his friends, the Indians, hunting. At last, however, Governor Geyer, thinking to subdue him by means of bodily punishment, switched him soundly and put him in the guard-room. He little knew the spirit that was in Henry Kelsey's breast. The lad escaped from his guards, jumped the walls, and took refuge with the Indians; and for many a long day the occupants of the fort saw neither hide nor hair of him. Where he went with his dusky friends, we do not know; possibly he did not know very clearly himself. But while he was away, he slipped completely into the Indian manner of life; he was adopted into the tribe, married an Indian wife, and donned the Indian costume.

It was just after Kelsey ran away from Fort Nelson that the company in Hudson Bay began to be troubled by the incursions of the French. In order to make up for the losses sustained because of French competition, the company endeavoured to induce some of the servants to go inland to get in touch with the Indian trade. Owing, however, to the sedentary policy the company had adopted, none of the company's servants was well qualified to undertake such a trip. It was at this juncture that Henry Kelsey reappeared. One day an Indian runner brought to Governor Geyer a piece of birch bark,

with a message from Kelsey scrawled in charcoal upon it. This message was to the effect that Kelsey had been inland with the Indians, and that he would lead an expedition of discovery into the interior if Governor Geyer would pardon him for running away.

Geyer replied that he was quite ready to pardon him, and Kelsey presented himself at the gates of the fort with his Indian wife. Geyer made some trouble about admitting the squaw into the fort (it was against all the rules of the company) ; but Kelsey refused to enter without her, and she was admitted with him.

Geyer issued to Kelsey a formal commission for discovery, and the next summer (1691), Kelsey set out for the interior.

We have Kelsey's own account of his remarkable and trying journey, in the Hudson's Bay report of 1749. His narrative is in some respects more detailed than many of the records of exploration ; but he gives little indication of the route which he followed. His journey seems to have taken him between five and six hundred miles inland ; but the only clue to the direction he took is to be found in his general descriptions of the country through which he passed, and his remarks on the game encountered. A difficulty in his narrative is the fact that he mentions crossing only one river, and that a small one ; yet it is impossible to travel five

hundred miles in any direction from Nelson Factory without encountering many rivers and streams. This fact has been taken as throwing doubt on Kelsey's journey; but it must be remembered that Kelsey was not, like David Thompson, the London lad who traversed the same country a century later, a professional surveyor, and he gives just as accurate an account of his route as men like Radisson and Groseilliers had done before him. The country he covered was new ground to him, and he probably resigned himself to the guidance of the Indians who were with him. It is not surprising, then, to find him vague as to the course he pursued.

The likelihood seems to be that Kelsey penetrated to the northern part of the modern province of Saskatchewan. Farther south he would have struck a country which, owing to the network of lakes and rivers running through it, is almost impassable; and his journal shows that he abandoned his canoes in order to travel faster. Farther north he would have struck the Lake Athabaska district; and it is difficult to conceive how he could have come near that great expanse of water without hearing of it from the Indians. If he ever made the trip he describes, he made it in the direction of the Saskatchewan prairies, but without reaching the Saskatchewan River.

In his wanderings, Kelsey did not lack for adventures. Just one month after he set out from Deering's Point, one of the Indians who was with him sickened and died. Kelsey gives in his journal an interesting description of the burial; the corpse 'was burnt in a fire, according to their way, they making a feast for him that did it; so, after the flesh was burned, the bones were buried, with logs set up round it.' By a characteristic course of Indian reasoning, Kelsey's companions blamed him for the sick man's death. It so happened that Kelsey dissuaded them from going on the warpath to avenge three of their squaws, who had been killed by a neighbouring tribe of Indians; they reasoned that the gods were angry with them for omitting the work of vengeance, and had punished them with the death of their comrade. It was only by giving what he calls 'a Feast of Tobacco,' and talking to them roundly, that Kelsey was able to pacify them. He told them plainly that they had not been given arms and ammunition by the company in order to slay their enemies; and he promised them that, if they went to war, they need never again show their faces at Fort Nelson, or expect to get any more guns and knives and beads. It was Kelsey's first lesson in the art of managing Indians, and he seems to have proved himself an adept at the outset.

Once, after the party had reached the prairies, Kelsey lost his way. Exhausted with hunting the buffalo, he fell asleep on the trail; and when he awoke there were none of the Indians to be seen. There was not even the dust of the buffalo hunt to give him a clue as to the whereabouts of his companions. About him stretched the illimitable prairie, with its grasses waving breast-high. It was only by following laboriously the trail of the crumpled grasses, and by watching the sky at night for the reflection of the camp fires, that Kelsey found his way back to the Indian camp.

What increased the respect of the Indians for Kelsey most of all, however, was an adventure he had with two grizzly bears. He was out hunting one day with one of the Indians when he came unexpectedly upon bruin and his mate. The bears knew no fear of fire-arms, and seemed disposed to parley. Kelsey and his companion, however, made for shelter. The Indian climbed a small tree, and Kelsey hid in a clump of willows, firing as he ran. The bears mistook the direction of the shot and pursued the Indian. From the vantage-ground of the willows, Kelsey took careful aim; and first one, and then the other, of the grizzlies was brought low by his bullets. The grizzly bear is a dangerous animal, and one hard to kill; and Kelsey's double victory over the beast

of prey most feared by the Indians gained him the name of Miss-top-ashish, or Little Giant.

Kelsey found the Indians of the interior, in search of whom he had made his journey. To their chief he presented, on behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company, a coat, a cap, and a sash, one of his own guns, some knives, awls, and tobacco, and a small quantity of powder and shot. With these presents the chief was greatly delighted. He expressed his sorrow that he had nothing worthy to offer in exchange ; but when Kelsey invited him to bring his furs down to Hudson Bay the following spring, he readily gave his promise to do so.

Having fulfilled his mission, Kelsey turned back toward Port Nelson, where he duly reported himself to Governor Geyer. Nothing immediate came of his mission, for, although the Indians of the prairies, true to their promise, did set out in the spring for Deering's Point, with a cargo of beaver skins, they were set on by hostile Crees and forced to turn back.

But even if nothing immediate in the way of trade returns resulted from Kelsey's journey, the journey was, nevertheless, an important one in the history of American exploration. It was the first attempt to explore the interior from Hudson Bay, and it foreshadowed the expansion of the company through the length and breadth of the great West. Kelsey was

the first man, with the exception of Radisson, to explore any part of what we know as the North-West; the first to visit one of the western tribes; the first to see and hunt the buffalo. Though he little knew it, the explorations of the little London street-arab were a great step in advance in the practical study of Canadian geography.

Kelsey lived for many years after 1691, and rose to a position of high authority in the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1697 he was deputy governor of York Fort, and afterwards, in 1717, he became governor. For a short time he was actually governor of the whole Bay.

He died in 1729. Behind him he left his Indian wife, who was granted by the company a gratuity of ten guineas, and a race of half-breed children, who perpetuated on the shores of Hudson Bay for many years the name of Kelsey.

The first organised attempt of the Hudson's Bay Company to carry out exploration was in the direction of the north-west. A generation after Henry Kelsey's day, the company sent out several expeditions by water in the hope of finding a north-west passage through the Arctic, and with the object also of investigating rumours of mineral wealth on the Arctic Coast. All these expeditions were comparatively fruitless; but the first of them, that of Captain Knight in 1719, was so disastrous that it stands out from all the others.

THE TRAGEDY OF DEAD MAN'S ISLAND

ON the west side of Hudson Bay, south of that arm of the sea known as Chesterfield Inlet, there is an island which the whalers still call by the ominous name of Dead Man's Island. On the maps it is marked Marble Island, probably owing to the fact that it is as bare of vegetable growth as a gravestone. At the east end of this island is a natural harbour, almost hidden to view by the rocky walls which guard the narrow entrance, and known for many years only to the Eskimos, who took refuge there in their bladder kayacks from the fury of the north-eastern gales.

One night, in the autumn of 1719, the Eskimos who were camped on the island were startled by the appearance of two huge ships, driving before the storm straight at the rocks at the entrance to the harbour. Two great shadows emerging from the blackness of the hurricane, they seemed like leviathans of the deep rushing for shelter. As the awestricken and superstitious natives watched, one of the ships ran foul of a reef. They saw the masts fall, and the frame of the vessel slowly dissolve, under the impact of the mountainous seas. The other ship, more fortunate, made the narrow

entrance to the harbour, and shot into shelter; but so great was its momentum that it climbed with a grinding sound heard above the clamour of the storm, up on the rocky shore. Human forms immediately appeared about the vessel, toiling like madmen to save the cargo before the storm completed its havoc; they could be seen running to and fro, now in the water and now out of it, carrying heavy loads, under which they staggered and reeled.

In an access of terror, the Eskimos fled from the spot. In the morning, however, filled with that curiosity which possesses primitive peoples, they returned cautiously to inspect once more the scene of the wreck. They found the survivors, who numbered about fifty souls, already at work setting up a house. Of the ships there was nothing to be seen but wreckage; but the white men seemed to have saved a good deal before the second ship went to pieces.

Whether the Eskimos made their presence known to the white men, is not clear; but if they did so, they did not remain with them long. The winter was soon to settle down, and the Eskimos, in anticipation of it, made off in their kayacks to the mainland.

The next summer (1720), as soon as the breaking up of the ice permitted it, the Eskimos returned to Marble Island to see how

the shipwrecked white men were getting along. The sight which they encountered as they entered the little harbour must have wrung their savage hearts. The numbers of the white men was reduced by about half, and there were many graves on the shore, graves scooped out of the drift sand, with boulders for a headstone. Those that remained alive seemed very unhealthy. The truth is that probably they had all fallen victims to the dreaded scurvy. What they had lived on during that terrible winter, it is difficult to imagine. They must have saved some provisions from the ship's stores; for the rest, they must have depended on an occasional Arctic hare or the carcass of a dead porpoise cast up on the shore. Of fresh meat and vegetable food which alone is a preventive against scurvy, they can have had almost none. When the Eskimos offered them raw seal meat and whale oil, they fell upon them like ravenous beasts.

In spite of their weakened condition, however, the castaways were, according to the Eskimos' account, busily engaged. Just what they were doing is not easy to understand. They may have been trying to lengthen the longboat, which had apparently been saved in a battered condition; or they may have been trying to make a new boat out of the ship's timbers that had drifted ashore. For many

years the chips that had flown from the carpenters' adzes were to be seen near the shore.

For some reason or other, the poor wretches were not able to complete their task. Perhaps they were physically unequal to it. So pitiable was their condition that some of the Eskimos, out of the kindness of their savage hearts, determined to spend the winter on the island. They took up their abode on the opposite side of the harbour to that on which the white men had erected their house, and frequently supplied them with such provisions as they had, which was chiefly whale's blubber and seal's flesh and train oil.

But in the spring of 1721 the Eskimos were compelled to return once again to the mainland; and the handful of white men were left once more to their own devices.

When the Eskimos came back in the summer of 1721, they found the castaways in the last stages of starvation. Only five of them were left, and these were in such distress that they eagerly ate the seal's flesh and whale's blubber quite raw, just as they received it. This surfeit of raw food disordered them to such an extent that three of the five died in the next few days.

The picture drawn by the Eskimos of the plight of the last two survivors is pitiable in the extreme. After having buried their comrades, they lasted on for many days. Their

clothes were in tatters, and they were clad in the skins of animals. They looked and behaved like madmen. Frequently they went to the top of an adjacent rock, and scanned the horizon, as if in expectation of some vessels coming to their relief. When nothing appeared, they would come back, and sitting close together, would weep bitterly. At length, one of the two died. His companion attempted to dig a grave for him ; but his strength was so exhausted that he too fell, and died among the Eskimo huts. So perished the last survivor of that ill-fated company.

The identity of these unfortunates, who suffered such a long-drawn-out death on that bald and barren island, is explained by a couple of laconic entries in the Parliamentary Report of the committee appointed to investigate the affairs of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1749. In the list of vessels fitted out by the company for the purpose of discovering the north-west passage, the first two entries run :

'1719. *Albany*, frigate ; Capt. George Berley, sailed from England on or about 5th June. Never returned.

'1719. *Discovery*, Capt. David Vaughan, sailed from England on or about 5th June. Never returned.'

From the records of the company, preserved in Hudson's Bay House, London, may be

gathered the details with regard to the setting-out of these ships. The expedition was under the command of Captain James Knight. Knight was a man who had grown old in the service of the company. He had risen from a humble position until he had become the governor of the whole Bay. He seems to have been a man of unconquerable energy, for in 1719 he was already eighty years of age. The idea of the expedition was his own. As governor of Albany he had come into relations with Indians who told him of vast copper mines to the north-west (about what is now known as the Copper-mine River), and about a metal which Captain Knight believed to be gold dust. They gave him to understand that the sea stretched to the north-westward of Hudson Bay, and that it was possible to reach the mouth of the Copper-mine River by ship. Old Captain Knight's imagination immediately took fire. He began to dream of the possibility of finding his way by a north-west passage to the Western Sea or Pacific Ocean, of finding those mythical 'Straits of Anian,' of which the Russians who had been to Alaska told; and, in addition to this, he was filled with dreams of gold-dust wealth along the shores of the Arctic Sea. He proposed to the company that he should be sent on a combined prospecting and exploring expedition and the partners of the company were so much

enamoured of his proposal that they promptly fitted him out with two ships, and sent him off, wishing him 'God-speed, a prosperous discovery, a fair wind, and a good sail.' Those were the days of the South Sea Bubble, when England was swept with a craze for wild-cat speculation ; and even the staid old Gentlemen Adventurers were caught by the mania. Knight himself was so confident that he would not only discover the elusive 'Straits of Anian,' but that he would also discover the gold and copper mines of which the Indians told, that he took with him a large number of iron-bound chests, in which he was going to bring the treasure home.

It was on June 3, 1719, that Knight set out, in company with two of the company's merchantmen, from Gravesend. After a dangerous passage, during which one of the merchantmen was crushed to kindling-wood in the ice of Hudson Strait, the expedition reached Fort Churchill. Here Knight stayed only long enough to leave provisions for the occupants of the port ; and then he turned his prows northward, toward the unknown Arctic Sea.

It was his intention to winter in the north. With that object in view, he had taken with him not only many months' provisions, but also the complete frame of a house, which could be set up in a few hours. Among his

men were blacksmiths and carpenters; and the expedition was even furnished with a surgeon, who was paid the unusually large salary of £50 a year. No expense had been spared to fit out the expedition in a thorough and complete fashion, and in such a way as to prepare it against a long absence from civilisation.

When, therefore, Captain Knight did not return to Churchill in the summer of 1720, little anxiety was felt about him. It was thought probable that he had discovered 'the Straits of Anian,' which led to the Western Sea, and that he was then sailing southward through the Pacific Ocean, and would in due course return to England by way of Cape Horn, with a cargo of spices and gold dust.

But when the spring of 1721 came, and there was still no word or sign of Knight and his men, some alarm began to be felt by the officials of the company, both in England and in Hudson Bay. On June 26, Henry Kelsey, the London street-arab who had risen in the service of the company until he had been appointed deputy-governor of the Bay during Captain Knight's absence, fitted out the sloop *Prosperous*, and sailed north from York Factory in quest of the missing explorers; but he returned in September without having found any trace of them. If Kelsey sailed near Dead Man's Island, he

must have missed the narrow entrance to the harbour, where the wrecks of the *Albany* and the *Discovery* lay.

The same summer the partners of the company in London bought the sloop *Whalebone*, John Scroggs, master, and sent it off to search for Knight. Scroggs arrived at Churchill while Kelsey was away in the *Prosperous*, and when it was too late for him to go far himself. He, therefore, wintered at Churchill, and set off north in the summer of 1722. He, too, failed to find the hidden hole-in-the-wall, which would have revealed the fate of Knight and his men ; and he returned empty-handed on July 25.

A few years later a Hudson's Bay Company officer named Norton, travelling inland with the Indians, heard rumours from the Eskimos regarding the wreck of Captain Knight's expedition. But it was not until 1767 that the fate of the expedition was actually discovered. In that year one of the company's vessels, engaged in the whale fishery, visited Dead Man's Island, and discovered the harbour at the eastern end of the island, which the search parties had hitherto overlooked. Sailing into this harbour, they found relics on every side of the lost expedition. The shores were strewn with guns, anchors, cables, bricks, a blacksmith's anvil, and many other articles which the Eskimos had found too heavy to carry away in their

light skin kayacks. The remains of the portable frame house which Knight had taken with him were still to be seen, as well as the hulls of the two vessels, which were lying in about five fathoms of water near the head of the harbour. Beside the house were found the skulls and other large bones of two men. These were, undoubtedly, the mortal remains of the last two survivors of the expedition.

Two years later Samuel Hearne visited the scene of the tragedy, and there he met a number of the Eskimos, among whom were several aged men. From these latter Hearne obtained a full and circumstantial account of what had happened. He was able to count the graves, which had been scraped open by the wolves; and he gathered up the skeletons along the shore, and buried them deep in a common grave. And to this day the whalers of those northern waters come to Dead Man's Island to bury their dead, and to set up crosses for those who lie in the sea without a sepulchre. The island has become the cemetery of the North.

Toward the end of the French period, the Hudson's Bay Company began to suffer from the competition of the French fur-traders who had gone into the West in the wake of the La Vérendryes, and who were cutting off the

Hudson Bay trade at its source. In 1754 they decided to send inland to strengthen their relations with the Indians one of the company's servants, Anthony Hendry. Hendry was the first of the English traders from Hudson Bay to meet on the prairies the French traders from New France ; and a dramatic interest therefore attaches to the story of his journey.

THE OUTLAWED SMUGGLER

THE occupants of a Hudson's Bay Company fort in the eighteenth century were a picturesque and motley crew. The fort was perhaps governed by a drunken, uncivilised half-breed, like Governor Moses Norton, who decked himself out in the fripperies of a gold lace uniform and ruled his subordinates with a rod of iron, and whose only qualification for his post was his ability to bring in trade returns. Under him were often the younger sons of English gentry, relatives perhaps of the partners of the company, packed off to Hudson Bay to be out of the way, or to expiate their early sins. There were street-arabs, picked up by the company off the streets of London ; there were country lads from the southern shires ; and already the company had begun to draw on the Orkneys and the Hebrides for that rugged and hardy Highland stock which has

provided it with so many of its best men. As the terrible Hudson Bay winter closed down, the hearts of the company's men must have gone out in longing to many different parts of the world. The heart of the sailor yearned for the high seas and the bustle of many a foreign port; the younger son of the English squire longed for the green lawns and stately trees of his ancestral home; the heart of the London ragamuffin was homesick for the sounds and smells of the Strand; and the eyes of the Orkneyman were dim with longing for the grey, forbidding, northern islands whence he came.

> 'From the lone shieling of the misty island,
> Mountains divide us, and the waste of seas;
> But still the blood is strong, the heart is Highland,
> And we in dreams behold the Hebrides.'

Among the company's servants at the middle of the century, there were few more interesting figures than that of Anthony Hendry. Hendry was (so we are told by his Scottish friend, Andrew Graham) a native of the Isle of Wight, off the south coast of England. He had been, if the truth must be told, a smuggler. The Isle of Wight was a centre for the smuggling trade between England and France, and Hendry had probably swung a lantern in many a cove along the shore, and helped in the unloading

of many a keg of French brandy, while he was still a lad. Smuggling had been with him his natural profession. One day, however, His Majesty's revenue cutter happened along unexpectedly, and Hendry and his companions were taken prisoners. In consequence of his arrest, he had sentence of outlawry passed against him. This meant that any one who wished to do so might shoot him down with impunity.

Under the circumstances, since England had become too hot for him, Hendry enlisted his services with the Hudson's Bay Company. It is probable that the partners of the company did not know of the sentence of outlawry passed against him ; but even if they had, the knowledge would not perhaps have made the slightest difference. A bold, adventurous smuggler, accustomed to a dangerous life on sea and land, was just the sort of servant for which the company was looking.

It was in 1748 that Hendry had been outlawed for smuggling. It was in 1750 that he entered the service of the Hudson's Bay Company. He was engaged as bookkeeper at York Factory, and came out to the Bay the same year. His bold and enterprising nature, however, did not allow him to limit himself to the duties of his office, but he interested himself from the first in the life of the bush, in the

ways of the Indians, and in the character of the country which stretched to the westward. Like Henry Kelsey, he spent his spare time conversing with the Indians, and trying to penetrate the veil of mystery which shrouded the interior.

It was just at this time that the company began to notice a shrinkage in the beaver returns. The Indians were not bringing their furs down to the Bay in such numbers as they had heretofore. The reason of this the officials of the company could only surmise, but they suspected, quite rightly, that the French *coureurs-de-bois*, who had followed La Vérendrye and his sons to the West, were cutting off their fur supply at its source. The company woke up from its long inaction on the shores of the Bay to find that the French from Canada had stolen a march on them. It became clear that if the fur-trade was to be retained the Hudson's Bay Company would have to go into the interior in quest of it.

Accustomed only to the sedentary life about the fur-post, most of the company's servants were loath to undertake a long and arduous journey into the interior, over country of which they knew nothing. But not so Anthony Hendry. He was a comparative tenderfoot; but in 1754, after having been on the Bay only four years, he volunteered to journey

inland with the Indians, to explore the vast, unknown regions from which the Indians came, and to discover the why and wherefore of the shrinkage in the beaver supplies. His offer was accepted with alacrity by Governor Isham of York Factory; and on June 26, 1754, Hendry set off from York Factory with a party of Cree Indians, and paddled inland up the Hayes River.

It was almost twelve months before his friends at York Factory saw Anthony Hendry again. During that time Hendry accomplished a journey which was a landmark in the history of western exploration. First of white men, he reached, from Hudson Bay, Lake Winnipeg and the Saskatchewan River, and came in touch with the Blackfeet Indians of the far western plains. He wintered in what is now the southern part of the province of Alberta, west of the Red Deer River, almost under the shadow of the Rockies.

Hendry's own account of his journey, with marginal notes by his friend, Andrew Graham, has been found among the countless manuscript journals and reports of Hudson's Bay Company officials stored up in Hudson's Bay House, in London. As might be expected it is a document of intense interest. It describes Hendry's progress inland with such detail that it is possible to follow his course on the map to-day. After a long and difficult

journey, during which Hendry and the Indians were more than once reduced to smoking their pipes in order to allay the pangs of hunger, the party reached the Saskatchewan.

Hendry was the first Englishman to reach the Saskatchewan, but not the first white man, for the French had already explored its course, and Hendry had not gone far upstream before he reached a trading-post which had been built the preceding year by a French trader named La Corne. He promptly paddled over to the landing-place; and his account of this first meeting between French and English in the great West is worthy of reproduction in his own words:

'On our arrival,' writes Hendry, 'two Frenchmen came to the water side and in a very genteel manner invited me to their home, which I readily accepted. One of them asked if I had any letter from my master, and where, on what design, I was going inland. I answered that I had no letter, and that I was sent to view the country, and intended to return in the spring. He told me that the master and men were gone down to Montreal with the furs, and that they must detain me till their return. However, they were very kind, and at night I went to my tent and told Attickashish or Little Deer, my leader, that had the charge of me, who smiled and said they dared not.'

Attickashish was right. The French invited Hendry to breakfast and dinner the next day, but nothing more was said apparently about detaining him until La Corne returned from Montreal, for on the morning of the second day Hendry and his Indian friends embarked in their canoes and continued their journey.

This meeting of English and French in the north-west (the only meeting, so far as we know, before the English conquest of Canada) is very interesting. The relations between Hendry and the French traders were courteous in the extreme. Hendry gave to the French a present of two feet of tobacco, which, he says, 'was very acceptable to them,' and they returned the compliment with the gift of some moose meat. Hendry must have picked up, in the course of his smuggling career, a working knowledge of French; and he and his hosts seem to have got along very pleasantly together. But in spite of all surface politeness, Hendry's appearance cannot have been a welcome one to the French. It presaged over half a century of warfare between the Company of Gentlemen Adventurers and the traders from Montreal, a warfare that did not end until the union of the Hudson's Bay men and the Nor'-Westers, in 1821.

A few miles west of the French post Hendry and his men 'cached' their canoes, and took

to foot. They were now well out on the plains, and very soon came to the Assiniboine Indians. It was Hendry's object to induce these Indians to come down to Hudson Bay to trade, but all his efforts to persuade them proved unavailing. Everywhere Hendry got the same answer. 'We are,' said the Indians, 'conveniently supplied from the Frenchmen's trading house; why should we attempt the long and dangerous journey to Hudson's Bay to secure what the French bring to our very doors?'

When Hendry reached the Blackfoot Indians, or as he called them the 'Archithinue Indians,' he received the same answer. These mounted warriors and huntsmen of the plains had not yet come to the knowledge of the Hudson Bay traders, and Hendry was very much surprised by their life and appearance, so different from that of the other Indians. When he returned to York Factory and told of the 'Archithinue Indians,' who rode furiously on horseback, he was regarded as a romancer of a malignant type. The Archithinue received him in one of their villages, where two hundred tepees were pitched opposite one another in two parallel rows. Hendry was led down the thoroughfare between the tents, spied upon by hundreds of eyes which never before had seen a white man, and was ushered into the lodge of the great chief at the farther end.

Here sat the chief of the Archithinue, with twenty elders about him. Hendry was bidden to sit down at his right hand. The pipe of peace was produced, and passed around in silence. A feast followed. Then Hendry, through his interpreter, told the great chief of the Blackfeet that he had been sent into his country by the Great Leader of the white men, to invite the young men of the Blackfeet to come down to see him and bring with them beaver and wolf skins, in return for which they would get guns, powder and shot, cloth, beads, and other commodities. The old man listened patiently, but shook his head. The Great Leader of the white men, he said, lived very far away. The young men of the tribe were accustomed to travel on horseback, not in canoes ; they were used to buffalo meat, and could not live on fish alone. The journey would, therefore, be attended with great hardships to them. Besides, they lacked nothing as they were. Their bows and arrows were sufficient to slay the buffalo ; whereas he had heard that, even with fire-arms, those who undertook the journey to Hudson Bay often died of starvation.

Hendry himself was compelled to admit the truth of these remarks ; and was forced, after spending the winter on the plains, to return in the spring to Hudson Bay without having

accomplished much in the way of expanding trade. He found, what it was going to take the Hudson's Bay Company years to learn, that if the Indians were to be induced to trade, it would be by traders going inland.

On his return journey Hendry stopped at the French post on the Saskatchewan, and found that Monsieur de la Corne had returned in the interval. La Corne was all politeness; he invited the Englishman to dine with him, and offered to do anything in his power to help him. His politeness was doubtless due to the knowledge that Hendry had really failed in his mission. Yet La Corne omitted nothing to impress his English visitor. He attired himself in the uniform of a French captain of marine, which was his official standing at the time; and he took Hendry in to show him his stock of furs—'a brave parcel,' says Hendry, 'of cased cats, martens, and parchment beaver.'

Poor Hendry was much discouraged. 'The French,' he came to the conclusion, 'speak several [Indian] languages to perfection; they have the advantage of us in every shape; and if they had Brazile tobacco, which they have not, would entirely cut off our trade.'

With this doleful news to report, he set off for York Factory, and reached there on June 20, 1755, almost twelve months from the day he had left it.

Almost immediately after Anthony Hendry's return to Hudson Bay, the Seven Years War broke out, and the upshot of this war was that Canada passed in 1763 into British hands. The conquest of Canada, however, brought no relief to the Hudson's Bay Company; for the French fur-trade in the West was immediately taken over by a swarm of English and American traders who made Montreal their base. The competition of these traders proved even more harassing than that of the French, and in 1774 the Hudson's Bay Company departed from its century-old policy of sitting tight on the shores of the Bay, and sent Samuel Hearne inland to establish a rival trading-post, Cumberland House, on the Saskatchewan River. Hearne was the first real explorer whom the Hudson's Bay Company had had in its service. His chief title to fame, however, rests, not on his establishment of Cumberland House or on his journeys to the prairie country, but on his earlier expedition of discovery overland toward the Arctic. It is the story of this which follows.

THE MINE OF COPPER

FROM the beginning of the eighteenth century, many rumours about copper deposits in the interior had reached the Hudson's Bay men at Prince of Wales Fort, on Churchill River. The Indians who came to trade at the fort often brought with them rough pieces of

copper ore, and ornaments and weapons fashioned out of the ore, which they readily traded instead of furs. On being asked where the copper came from, they said it was found on the banks of a river which they called the Far-off-Metal River, where it could be picked up from the surface of the ground in great quantities; but that the distance of this river from the Hudson Bay fort was so great as to prevent them bringing in much of it to trade.

As early as 1719 an attempt had been made by the Hudson's Bay men to reach this fabulous bed of copper. In that year, as we have seen, old Captain Knight, the governor of Churchill, set out to reach the place by way of the Arctic Ocean. 'Governor Knight,' says one of the chroniclers of the company, 'and Captain Barlow, being well assured that there were rich mines to the northward, from the accounts of the Indians of those parts who had brought some of the ore to the factory, were bent upon making the discovery; and the Governor said he knew the way to the place as well as to his bedside.' Captain Knight, however, did not come within hundreds of miles of the mineral wealth he sought; and with the exception of one or two sporadic attempts at discovery, the project of reaching the Far-off-Metal River fell into the background for half a century or so.

It was probably the discovery of the remains of Captain Knight's ill-starred expedition on Marble Island, in 1767, that turned the thoughts of the Hudson's Bay men once more to the copper mine in the interior. It so happened also that a band of Northern or Athabaskan Indians, who visited the fort the next year, in 1768, brought with them some fine specimens of copper ore, which they said came from the Coppermine or Far-Off-Metal River.

The governor of Churchill at that time was Moses Norton, who, drunken half-breed though he was, was a man of more than ordinary intelligence and strength of character. He questioned the Indians minutely as to the distance and direction of the Coppermine River; and when he found that it was only four hundred miles north-west of the mouth of Churchill River, he determined to send out an expedition to visit it and report upon it. He induced the Indians to prepare rough charts on birch bark; he placed all the information he could gather before the partners of the Hudson's Bay Company in London; and he obtained their sanction for his venture. The plan which he proposed was not one which entailed much expense upon the company; he was going to send out one or two of the company's servants with a band of Northern Indians, who would both guide them and support them as they proceeded.

Stanford's Geographical Estab London

The man whom Moses Norton selected as the leader of the expedition was a young Englishman named Samuel Hearne. Like many another man commissioned to report upon a mining property, both before and since that time, Samuel Hearne knew little or nothing of mining. He had been brought up as a midshipman in the Royal Navy, in which he had been placed by a widowed mother at an early age; but he had, while still a youth, left the navy, and taken service on one of the sloops of the Hudson's Bay Company, trading with the Eskimos in Hudson Bay. The reason why he was chosen to lead the expedition to the Coppermine River was because his nautical training had given him a knowledge of geography and surveying which, defective as it was, was superior to that of the other servants of the company.

Hearne's first attempt to reach the Coppermine was made in the autumn of 1769. He was at that time only twenty-four years of age. As he marched out of the gates of Fort Prince of Wales that November morning, under the salute of seven cannon, he must have felt confident of success. He had with him a carefully picked party. There were two Englishmen, volunteers; two of the Home-Guard Southern Indians or Crees, in whom Norton placed especial confidence, perhaps

because they were of his own particular tribe; and a band of Northern Indians or Chippewyans, under their leader, Chawchinahaw; and he was equipped with instruments, maps, ammunition, and supplies sufficient for two years. Yet neither on that expedition nor on the next did he come anywhere near the objective of his journey.

On the first trip, the party were hardly out of sight of Churchill before Chawchinahaw and his Indians began to give Hearne trouble. Unfortunately, Hearne, although a man of pluck and perseverance, did not have the knack of controlling the Indians. There was an undoubted strain of weakness in his character, and it did not take Chawchinahaw long to discover this. He had been induced to embark on the expedition against his will, and he promptly set himself to thwart it in every possible way. Finally, finding that Hearne was not to be turned back by petty annoyances, he and his men one day deserted in a body, and with shouts of derisive laughter, which made the woods ring, left Hearne to his own devices. Hearne and the men that were left him were compelled to make their way back to the fort, a distance of nearly two hundred miles, as best they could; and they had to endure the mortification of marching into the fort only a month after they had set out.

A second start was made two or three months later, on February 23, 1770. This time Hearne took with him a smaller party, three Northern Indians and two of the Home-Guard Indians settled about the fort. The Englishmen he left behind, convinced that they were more of a hindrance than a help.

On this journey Hearne was absent from the fort nearly nine months. In that time he penetrated farther to the north-west than probably any white man up to this time. But once more he experienced trouble with the Indians. They pottered about all winter and spring, and when the summer came, they wandered hither and thither in search of caribou and musk-ox, until the year became too far advanced to admit of their reaching the Copper-mine that summer. Hearne would have wintered with them and pushed on the following spring, but on August 11 he suffered a catastrophe which made a further advance fruitless. On that day, when he went to eat his midday meal, he left his quadrant standing upright on the rocks. A heavy gust of wind came along and blew it down, smashing it to pieces. Having lost his quadrant, there was now little object in pursuing his explorations further, and he sorrowfully retraced his steps to Fort Prince of Wales, which he reached in safety on November 25.

On his way back to the fort, Hearne fell in

with a famous Northern Indian named Matonabbee. Matonabbee was a splendid example of the North American Indian at his best, such as has given rise to the epithet of 'the noble red man.' Hearne treated Matonabbee, who was half-starved and half-frozen, with great kindness, helping to fit him out again with clothes and supplies; and when Matonabbee learned of the repeated failure which had dogged Hearne's footsteps in his attempt to reach the Coppermine, he offered his services as guide if Hearne wished to make another attempt the next year.

Hearne gladly accepted Matonabbee's offer, and put himself unreservedly in his hands. Matonabbee did not hesitate to point out to Hearne where he had made mistakes. He ridiculed Hearne's idea of setting out, for instance, without women. Women, he said, were indispensable. They could carry or haul twice as much as a man; they could pitch the tents, make and mend clothing, and do all the necessary things about the camp, while the men were away hunting. 'Moreover,' added Matonabbee, 'though they do everything, they are maintained at a trifling expense; for as they always do the cooking, the very licking of their fingers in scarce times is sufficient for their subsistence.' Hearne was much shocked by Matonabbee's unchivalrous ideas; but he

had the good sense to adopt them, and the wives of Matonabbee's followers who accompanied him on his third expedition probably had a large share in accomplishing its success.

It was on December 7, 1770, that Hearne and Matonabbee set out on the journey, which was to take them to the mouth of the Coppermine River. It would be tedious to describe in detail the course which they followed. Much of it has never been traversed either before or since by the feet of white men ; and Hearne's survey of some of his course is still the basis of the map of that part of Canada. As they approached the neighbourhood of the copper mine, they struck one of the main Indian trails to the mine, a road so well travelled that Hearne describes it as being ' as plain and well-beaten as any bye foot-path in England.'

On reaching the copper mine, Hearne experienced a disappointment. The Indians had represented the river as a mighty stream, navigable by large vessels for many miles from the mouth. Hearne found it to be scarcely navigable by canoes, being less than two hundred yards wide and full of shoals. The much-talked-of copper mines he found to be an even greater disappointment. They were, he wrote afterwards, ' nothing but a jumble of rocks and gravel.' The Indians had reported that the mines were so rich that if a factory

were built at the mouth of the river a ship might be ballasted with the ore instead of stone. As a matter of fact, after a search of four hours, all Hearne was able to find was one piece of ore, about four pounds in weight, which he took back with him to Fort Prince of Wales. That Hearne did not find any valuable copper deposits, does not, of course, argue that none existed; for Hearne was not a mineralogist. What Hearne did do, was to point out the inaccessibility of the mine, and the impossibility of making much use of it, no matter how rich it was.

After following the Coppermine River to its mouth, where it flowed into the Arctic Ocean, and where his Indians mercilessly slaughtered a band of helpless Eskimos, Hearne struck south and west to what is now Great Slave Lake. He was the first white man to gaze upon that vast expanse of water. His course for the latter part of his journey is very uncertain, for he lost his quadrant just after leaving the Coppermine River, and while he was at Great Slave Lake his watch stopped, so that he was left without any means of estimating distances with any degree of accuracy. After an absence of nearly nineteen months, however, he once more found himself back at Fort Prince of Wales, on June 26, 1772.

Hearne's third journey was probably the

most notable feat of exploration in the annals of the Hudson's Bay Company. Not only did it add greatly to the geographical knowledge of the interior of the northern part of the continent, but it also set at rest the question of a 'north-west passage through Hudson Bay.' Hearne had penetrated so far inland that it became clear that the Pacific Ocean was not to be easily reached by that route. The journey set at rest also the rumours of vast mineral wealth in the interior, and caused the Hudson's Bay Company to devote its energies thenceforth to the acquisition of furs. The account of Hearne's journey, which was published in 1795 in London under the title of *A Journey from Prince of Wales Fort in Hudson's Bay to the Northern Ocean*, proved to be a storehouse of information regarding the Indian tribes and the flora and fauna of the country he traversed. It is not an exaggeration to say that the book is one of the two or three classics of Canadian exploration.

Two years after his return from the Coppermine, Hearne was sent inland again, but this time upon a different errand. The traders from Montreal had been cutting off the company's supply of furs at its source, and Hearne was sent inland to cope with them. He built on the Lower Saskatchewan River the first inland trading-post of the Hudson's Bay

Company, Cumberland House, on Cumberland Island. In 1775 he was appointed Governor of Fort Prince of Wales; and he was still in command in 1782 when the famous French admiral, La Pérouse, appeared before the fort and forced it to surrender. Hearne's prompt and unconditional surrender of the post has given rise to charges of cowardice on his part; and it is difficult to acquit him altogether of weakness on that occasion. He might at least have made a show of resistance. But at worst his surrender of the fort can only be described as an error in judgment; for the man who blazed the trail to the Coppermine, and who braved the competition of the Nor'-Westers on the Saskatchewan cannot fairly be dubbed a coward.

In 1787 Hearne left the service of the Hudson's Bay Company, and returned to England. There he died, still a comparatively young man, in 1792.

In the fight for the fur, the Hudson's Bay Company was soon outdistanced by the merchants from Montreal, who in time organised themselves into the North-West Company. It was not long before the latter stopped the supply of furs above Cumberland House. In 1778, a rough American trader, named Peter Pond, penetrated to Lake Athabaska, which

he was the first white man to visit; and in 1786 Cuthbert Grant built a trading-post on Great Slave Lake, which Hearne had discovered fifteen years before. The Hudson's Bay Company was compelled to redouble its efforts, and so began that bitter rivalry between the Hudson's Bay men and the Nor'-Westers which ended only with the union of the two companies in 1821. But in the struggle the Nor'-Westers were generally a lap ahead of the Hudson's Bay Company; and it was a Nor'-Wester, Alexander Mackenzie, who first achieved the object which had been the goal of the desires of so many explorers through so many centuries—the discovery of an overland route to the Pacific.

TO THE FROZEN AND PACIFIC OCEANS

IN the year 1801 there was published in London, and dedicated to His Majesty King George III., a book entitled *Voyages from Montreal through the Continent of North America to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans, in* 1789 *and* 1793. Though the name of the author, Alexander Mackenzie, was new to the reading public, the book had an immediate success. It was read both by those who were interested in thrilling narratives of discovery, and by those who were interested in scientific geo-

graphy. The Earl of Selkirk read it, and it prompted his purchase of a controlling interest in the Hudson's Bay Company, and his colonisation schemes in eastern and western Canada. The great Napoleon read it, and had it translated for the benefit of his staff officers. The ministers of George III. read it, and recommended the author for the honour of knighthood.

Alexander Mackenzie was a poor Scottish lad, born at Stornoway in the Isle of Lewis, in 1763. He came of good family, as indeed every Highlander does, for the clansmen are all the cousins of the chief. There was, however, no future before him in Scotland, and at the age of sixteen he emigrated to Canada. His first position was in the Montreal counting-house of Gregory, M'Leod and Company, the fur-trading firm which was later known as 'the Little Company,' to distinguish it from the North-West Company, of which it was a rival. After several years in the counting-house, Mackenzie was promoted to take part in the inland trade. For a year he was at Detroit, then an isolated settlement hundreds of miles from anywhere; and it was here that he gained his apprenticeship as a fur-trader.

He must early have impressed his employers by his ability and resourcefulness, for in 1785 he was given shares in the company, and raised to the dignity of a *bourgeois* or partner. From

Detroit he was sent to the West, and there he was given the dangerous and difficult task of intercepting the furs destined for the Hudson's Bay Company, on the Churchill River. Not only did he have to face the rivalry of the Hudson's Bay Company, but he had to encounter the still more severe competition of the North-West Company, who camped on his trail with panther-like watchfulness. In the manœuvring and jockeying for position, blood was spilt. One of Mackenzie's men was murdered, one was lamed, and another was wounded in the body. Mackenzie, however, succeeded in outwitting the Nor'-Westers, and it was he that got the furs that were bound for Hudson Bay.

After the union of the Little Company and the North-West Company, in 1787, Mackenzie was sent up to take charge of the farthest and most dangerous of all the fur-trading districts, that about Lake Athabaska. Lake Athabaska was, on account of its geographical position, the key to the far north-west. It was surrounded by the richest of all the fur-bearing countries. Owing, however, to the violent conduct of an American trader named Peter Pond, who had been in charge of the district before Mackenzie, the Indians of the neighbourhood were unsettled and difficult to handle. Mackenzie's appointment to the post was a

compliment of the highest sort. It had been hitherto the policy of the fur-trading companies to trust the command of important posts only to the old and tried men. Alexander Mackenzie, in 1787, was a young man of no more than twenty-four years of age, and he had been actively engaged in the fur-trade for only two or three years. His appointment to the command of the Athabaska district was, therefore, almost as remarkable as the appointment of Sir George Simpson to the governorship of the Hudson's Bay Company, after only one winter spent in Rupert's Land.

The life of the factor of a fur-trading post in the early days was never, in spite of the romantic colours in which it has sometimes been depicted, a very exciting one. 'How do you spend your time?' wrote a young clerk of the North-West Company to a friend at another post, who, like himself, had received a good education. 'I rise with the sun; I go to see the traps; if a number of Indians arrive I buy their furs, then I eat Tollibee [white fish] three times a day. Do you see? I find the time very long, and I fear that my constitution will be seriously injured by that kind of a life, but what can be done? I make a dog train; I bend some wood for snowshoes; and with perseverance I hope to learn the use of the crooked knife.'

Such a life as this Alexander Mackenzie found very wearisome at Athabaska. He was consumed with ennui, and began to feel himself degraded and useless. At first he turned to reading, and he began to collect a library at the post which was for many years the best and largest library in the West. But he did not find that reading allayed his restless feeling. He became conscious of a desire to strike out into wider fields, to penetrate the unknown territories to the north and west, and if possible to discover that north-west passage for which Cartier and Champlain, La Salle and La Vérendrye, Hudson and Knight, had all searched in vain. His ambition was to be up and doing, and he felt that on an exploring trip he might begin to live again.

There were, however, two obstacles in the way. In the first place, it was difficult for him to leave his post on the Athabaska ; and in the second place, he was in such ill favour with the great M'Tavish, who was at the head of the North-West Company, that he felt it very doubtful if he would be given a commission to explore the countries to the north and west. The first difficulty was overcome by his inducing his cousin, Roderick Mackenzie, who was afterwards the historian of the fur-trade, to take his place. 'He informed me,' wrote Roderick Mackenzie in his *Reminiscences*, 'in

confidence that he had determined on undertaking a voyage of discovery the ensuing spring (1789) by the water communications reported to lead from Slave Lake to the Northern Ocean, adding that if I could not return and take charge of his department in his absence, he must abandon his intentions.' The second difficulty he obviated by keeping his plans to himself, and not depending upon the company. 'I already mentioned to you,' he wrote to his cousin in 1788, 'some of my distant intentions. I beg you will not reveal them to any person, as it might be prejudicial to me, though I may never have it in my power to put them in execution.'

As soon as Rory Mackenzie had mastered the details of the administration of the post, Alexander Mackenzie felt at liberty to set out on his journey of exploration. He took with him four French-Canadian *voyageurs*, two of them having their wives with them, and a steady young German named Steinbruck. As a guide he secured a splendid Indian named English Chief, who accompanied him with two canoes filled with his wives and dependants. The party set out on June 3, 1798. We have Mackenzie's own record of the departure in his Journal; and surely no more memorable occasion was ever commemorated in so modest and commonplace a manner :

'June, 1789, Wednesday 3. We embarked at nine in the morning at Fort Chipewyan, on the south side of the Lake of the Hills . . . in a canoe made of birch-bark.'

For the details of the journey the reader must refer to Mackenzie's own journal. The party crossed Lake Athabaska, entered Peace River or Slave River, descended it to Great Slave Lake, and then launched their canoes in the waters of the river which is still known by the name of Mackenzie. The journey was accompanied by bitter discomforts and toils. For nine nights fog lay so heavy on the river that not a star was seen. This was followed by driving wind and rain. So rough were the portages that the *voyageurs* wore out their moccasins at the rate of a pair a day. Even Mackenzie's tough French-Canadians began to murmur. Mackenzie had to promise them that if they did not reach the Arctic Ocean in seven days, he would turn back.

That very night Mackenzie saw a cheering sight. The sun hung so high above the northern horizon that the men rose by mistake to embark at midnight. They did not know, as Mackenzie knew, that they were in the land of the midnight sun, and that they were near the sea. They pushed on until one morning they found that the water had risen, and that their baggage was threatening to

float away. Then they realised, with a shout, what had happened. They had reached tide-water, and they were on the borders of the Frozen Sea.

On July 14, forty-three days after setting out, Mackenzie erected on an island at the mouth of the river, which he named Whale Island, a wooden post on which he engraved the latitude of the place, his own name, the number of persons he had with him, and the time he remained there. Then he commenced in haste the return journey, fearful lest he might be frozen in, and forced to spend a long northern winter in the precarious hunting grounds of the Arctic Circle.

Both descending and ascending the Mackenzie, the explorers saw to the west a line of snow-capped mountains. Gazing at them, the idea occurred to Mackenzie that perhaps it might be possible to cross them and reach the Pacific. He questioned the Indians, but got no satisfaction from them. In any case, he reflected, such an expedition could only be undertaken at another time.

But when he was back at Fort Chipewyan on Lake Athabaska, the idea continued to germinate in his mind. In the spring of 1790 he descended with the furs to Grand Portage on Lake Superior, which was the headquarters of the North-West Company. There he re-

ported his voyage of exploration; but the partners were so much taken up with the preparations being made for a life-and-death struggle with the Hudson's Bay Company that they had little attention to bestow on an expedition which had no immediate connection with furs. 'My expedition,' wrote Mackenzie to his cousin, 'was hardly spoken of, but that is what I expected.' Nothing abashed, he placed his other project before the partners. He asked permission to explore the Peace River to its source in the mountains and to cross the mountains in the hope of reaching the Pacific. The partners consented. The North Pacific coast was beginning to loom up in men's minds. The voyages of discovery of Captain Cook and Captain Meares up the coast of British Columbia were reviving in men's minds the desire to find the overland route to the Western Sea.

That winter Mackenzie spent in England, studying astronomy and surveying, so that, on his trip to the Pacific, he might take more accurate observations for longitude and latitude, and reading geography, so that he might be well furnished with information regarding the shores he was anxious to reach. The autumn of 1792 found him back at Fort Chipewyan. There he spent a restless winter waiting for the navigation to open. 'I have been so vexed

of late that I cannot sit down to anything steadily,' he confesses in a letter to his cousin. But by April he had shipped the season's furs off to the east, and on May 9, 1793, he set off on his quest for the sea.

In the party there were in all ten men. There was Mackenzie himself and his assistant, Alexander Mackay, a clerk of the North-West Company ; and there were six French-Canadian *voyageurs*, and two Indians. They were all tried men, and well they needed to be. Mackenzie took them up the Peace River to its source, across a pass of the Rockies, and down the Fraser River. Any one who knows anything about these torrents of the mountain regions will realise something of the dangers and hardships which Mackenzie and his men had to endure. A dozen times they nearly lost their lives in the whirlpools and the rapids. They paddled ahead without map or guide. The Indians were hostile and suspicious. Mackenzie's own men were panic-stricken and mutinous. Worst of all, the river seemed to be taking them in the wrong direction.

At last they came to some Indians who, on the display of presents, were willing to hold parley with them. From these Indians Mackenzie learned that the river he was following ran for 'many moons' through the 'shining mountains' before it reached the 'midday

sun.' They told him, however, that by returning up the river they would reach a carrying-place from which they could reach the sea overland in eleven days.

Mackenzie offered his men two alternatives. He offered either to return with them to Fort Chipewyan or to lead them on this eleven days' dash to the sea. To his delight they all chose the latter alternative; and after a terrible march on reduced rations, the party reached the Pacific on July 22, 1793. 'Alexander Mackenzie from Canada by land,' they wrote on the face of a great rock, 'the twenty-second of July, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three. Lat. 52 deg. 20 min. 28 sec. N.'

The search for the Western Sea, which had been for two or three centuries the lodestar of explorers, was at last crowned with success. What Cartier and Champlain and Hudson and La Salle and La Vérendrye had failed to accomplish, Alexander Mackenzie, a young Scotsman, barely thirty years of age, had succeeded in doing.

After his overland journey to the Pacific, Alexander Mackenzie rested on his laurels. The publication of his Journal, in 1801, brought him the honour of knighthood at the hands of the Crown. He was for many years an important figure in the councils of the North-West Company. In 1808, however, he retired

to Scotland, bought himself an estate in the Highlands, and there spent the remaining years of his life.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Mackenzie's exploits were gradually followed up. In 1806 Simon Fraser, another member of the North-West Company, crossed the Peace River Pass, built some trading-posts on the west side of the mountains, and in 1807 followed to its mouth that river which Mackenzie had found unnavigable. Both Mackenzie and Fraser thought this river the Columbia, the mouth of which had been discovered by an American navigator in 1792 ; but in this they were mistaken, and the river has since that time borne fittingly the name of the Fraser. The exploration of the Columbia was carried out a few years later by another Nor'-Wester, David Thompson. Thompson occupies, for a variety of reasons, such a unique place in the history of Canadian exploration, and the story of his life is so little known, that it is fitting that some account of it should be set down here.

THE MAN WHO READ THE STARS

WHEN one looks at a map, one does not as a rule realise what the making of the map has meant. One does not realise that every crooked line in its delicate tracery has meant toils and privations unspeakable ;

that here and there rivers and lakes and hills have been drawn at the cost of lost lives and ruined careers. Looked at rightly, there is nothing more instinct with romance and adventure than a map. But people to-day are not romantic; they take their maps as they find them, and do not ask any questions.

The readers of this page will all have studied, at some time or other, the map of the Canadian West. Yet it will doubtless not have occurred to many of them to ask who the man was that drew the map, or at any rate filled in the outlines of it. And the strange thing is that if they were told the name of this man, it would probably be quite unfamiliar to them, and would convey nothing to them at all. The record of his work is to be found almost solely in the maps which he drew; and as every one knows, even great maps are allowed to pass unnoticed, while the most trivial books are published in large editions, and read with avidity.

The man who did the ground-work in connection with the map of Western Canada was David Thompson. Thanks especially to Mr. J. B. Tyrrell, the Canadian scholar and explorer, who has followed David Thompson's footsteps over a great part of the West, Thompson's work is at last beginning to emerge from the obscurity in which it has languished for over

a century, and we are beginning to find out something about his life, and to understand something of the magnitude of his achievement.

David Thompson was born on April 30, 1770, in the parish of St. John the Evangelist, Westminster, England. His parents were of Welsh origin, and late in life David Thompson was observed to betray, by his speech, his Welsh extraction. His parents must have been very poor, for at the age of seven years David Thompson was sent to the famous charity school in Westminster known as the Grey Coat School. In this school he remained until he was fourteen years of age, studying especially mathematics and navigation.

In 1784 the Hudson's Bay Company, being desirous of obtaining recruits for their trading-posts in America, applied to the Governors of the Grey Coat School to obtain boys who might be apprenticed to the company. They evidently desired boys who were qualified to do surveying, for the only boy sent them was David Thompson, whose training had been along mathematical lines.

Thompson arrived at Churchill, on Hudson Bay, in September 1784. Here he commenced his career in the fur-trade, which lasted without interruption for twenty-eight years. At Churchill, he was under the command of Samuel

Hearne, the explorer who twelve years before had made the overland journey to the mouth of the Coppermine River, and set at rest the vexed question of the existence or non-existence of the North-West Passage. Thompson was set at work copying part of the manuscript of Hearne's *Journey*; and undoubtedly his association with his superior did much to stimulate his interest in geography and discovery.

It was not, however, until 1787 that Thompson was sent on his first trip into the interior. In that year he went in with two other servants of the company to a point on the North Saskatchewan River, not far from the present town of Battleford, where the party built a fur-trading post named Manchester House. He spent a winter among the Indians; and in 1789 he was back at Cumberland House, on Pine Island Lake, the post which Samuel Hearne had built fifteen years before for the purpose of competing with the merchants from Montreal.

It was at Cumberland House that Thompson began his career as a scientific surveyor and observer of natural phenomena. He began to keep, what he never afterwards in the West failed to keep, a journal in which were entered the readings of the thermometer, the force and direction of the wind, and general remarks on

the climate. More than that, he took during the winter a series of astronomical observations, for the purpose of determining the latitude and longitude of Cumberland House. It is interesting to notice that the position on the earth's surface which he assigned to Cumberland House is precisely that which it occupies on the most modern and authoritative maps. This is the more remarkable when it is remembered that Thompson was at this time only nineteen years of age, that he had had a very slight training, and that his instruments were so small they could be held in the hand. When Samuel Hearne attempted to determine the latitude of the mouth of the Coppermine River, he placed it four degrees too far north; when David Thompson determined the latitude of Cumberland House, he determined it for all time.

From 1789 until he left the western country in 1812, David Thompson never ceased to carry on the surveying which he thus began. There was no lake or river which he traversed of which he did not make a careful survey; and there was no post at which he stopped of which he did not find the latitude and longitude. Nor was he satisfied with making one survey or taking one series of observations. If ever he came the same way again he made a new survey and took new observations with the

object of checking and verifying the old. Thus he had, after his many years in the West, definite points established on the earth's surface, between which he had made the connecting surveys. All he had to do was to put these points down on paper, and then to fill in the lines between them; and so the map of Western Canada took shape.

Among the fur-traders and *voyageurs* and Indians with whom his lot was cast there were almost none who understood this scientific zeal. The French-Canadians and Indians with him always regarded his instruments with awe, and believed that, when he spent his nights gazing at the stars, he was looking into the future. They credited him with powers of divination; and nothing he could say would disabuse them of this view. Several things happened which gave colour to this belief. Thompson very early proved himself an expert woodsman. He developed a power of reading the signs of the bush no less accurately and skilfully than the acutest of the Indians. One time when he was with the brigade of furs coming down to Lake Winnipeg, he prophesied, as a result of his observation of the camp fires they had made and of the weather they would encounter at the entrance to Lake Winnipeg, that his men would catch up with the brigade ahead of them on such and such a morning.

On the morning in question, as they entered the lake, his men saw the brigade they were following only a short distance ahead of them. Their wonder and admiration was unbounded. They would not believe that Thompson had made the prophecy merely by using his eyes and common sense; nothing would persuade them that he had not learnt the truth by gazing through his telescope.

The Indians believed he had the power of raising the wind. One time when he was taking astronomical observations, an Indian hunter came to him and begged him to raise a big wind, as there had been a calm for a long time, and the hunting had been so bad that his family were on the verge of starvation. Thompson tried to reason with him, and explained that no one but the Great Manitou could raise the wind. The Indian was not satisfied. In a short time he returned again, with the same request. By this time it had become clear to Thompson, from his study of the weather, that a windstorm was looming up. In order to get rid of the Indian, he told him to go away and make preparations for hunting, as he would get a wind that night. When the wind came, not only the Indians, but also Thompson's own men were firm in the belief that 'the man who read the stars' had raised the wind by looking through his telescope into the future.

The fur-traders showed their lack of understanding in another way. All Thompson's surveys had been carried on in conjunction with the fur-trade. The fur-trade was the main thing, and the surveying was supposed to be merely incidental to it. It is possible, however, that since Thompson's heart was in the surveying rather than in the fur-trade, the surveying sometimes took first place, and the fur-trade suffered. At any rate, after a year during which the fur-trade returns had proved especially disappointing, he received orders from Joseph Colen, the factor at York Factory, to drop his surveying for the time being, and devote himself exclusively to the acquisition of furs.

From the standpoint of trade returns these instructions of the governor of York Factory may have been wise; but they lost for the Hudson's Bay Company the services of one of the greatest men it ever had in its employ. Thompson was in no mind to drop the task which he had set himself; and so in the spring of 1795, after having been with the Hudson's Bay Company for thirteen years, he summarily left its service, and walking south seventy-five miles to the nearest post of the North-West Company of Montreal, he enlisted with that rival organisation of the Hudson's Bay Company, and received permission to prosecute his surveys to his heart's content.

The leading spirits in the North-West Company at that time were men like Alexander Mackenzie, Roderick Mackenzie, and Simon Fraser, who had the interests of discovery and exploration as much at heart as David Thompson. They immediately sent him off on a surveying trip which was to prove one of the most remarkable in the history of North American map-making. He was to be unhampered by the necessity for looking after trade returns, and was to devote himself to surveying alone. It must be confessed that he made the most of his opportunities. Starting at Grand Portage on Lake Superior, he struck north-west to Lakes Winnipeg and Winnipegosis; thence he struck south down the Assiniboine to the Souris River, and across the plains to the Mandan villages on the Missouri; from there he returned to the Assiniboine, followed it down to the Red River, struck across to the headwaters of the Mississippi, and made his way north-west to Lake Superior, which he struck near the site of the present city of Duluth; and then he made a complete survey of the shore-line of Lake Superior, from Duluth to Sault Ste. Marie, and from Sault Ste. Marie to Grand Portage—having covered a total of four thousand miles of survey through virgin territory in a period of about ten months. This is a record that has rarely been equalled.

But David Thompson's greatest achievement, and that which most entitles him to his fame as an explorer, was his survey of the Columbia River. In the opening years of the nineteenth century, there was great rivalry as to who should first get to the Pacific coast, and seize and hold the fur-trade there. In 1805 the United States government sent out the famous Lewis and Clark expedition, which blazed a trail to the Pacific; and it was known that J. J. Astor, of New York, was planning to capture the fur-trade in that district for himself. The North-West Company, anxious to anticipate him, sent David Thompson across the Rockies in the spring of 1807 to open up trade with the Indians of what is now British Columbia. For three years Thompson passed to and fro across the Rockies, opening up new trading-posts and blazing new trails, preparatory to a descent on the coast.

He had some difficulty with the Indians, for the Indians of the plains did not care to have their enemies, the Indians of British Columbia, supplied with fire-arms; but Thompson circumvented them by marching through one of the northern passes in the dead of winter, and in 1811 he made the difficult and dangerous descent of the Columbia River to its mouth. There he found the agents of J. J. Astor's Pacific Fur Company already entrenched in

Fort Astoria ; but although they had robbed him of the honour of setting up the British flag on Cape Disappointment, they could not rob him of the honour of being the first to traverse and survey that mighty river. It is an interesting fact that portions of the Columbia River have never been surveyed from that day to this ; and here too Thompson's work is the basis of every map that is published.

In 1812 Thompson returned to Grand Portage, and thence to Montreal. He had put the coping-stone on his work of exploration ; and never again did he visit the western country in which he had lived so long. He settled down at Williamstown, Glengarry, and afterwards at Terrebonne, near Montreal, and devoted himself to the preparation of his monumental map. His last years were sad and piteous. He lost his money, largely through the fault of his half-breed sons, and in his later years he lost his eyesight. People forgot the greatness of his achievement, and he died in extreme poverty and neglect. In one of the last of his note-books, which are still to be seen in the Crown Lands Department at the Parliament Buildings in Toronto, there is a pathetic entry in the old man's handwriting : ' Borrowed 2s. 6d. from a friend. Thank God for this relief.'

By the time of the union of the Hudson's Bay and North-West Companies in 1821, not one but several overland routes to the Pacific had been discovered. The vision of a water-route from the Atlantic to the Pacific, however, still tarried. If this route existed, it could only be by way of the Arctic Ocean; and during the nineteenth century the interest of explorers shifted to the finding of such a route, and the uncovering of the Arctic Coast. The story of the exploration of the Arctic Coast of Canada is indissolubly bound up with the name of Sir John Franklin; and the story of his last tragic expedition is the final chapter of the series of tales which we have ventured to re-tell.

AN ARCTIC MYSTERY

IN 1844—in the first decade of the famous Victorian Era—the British Admiralty decided to make a final effort to discover the North-West Passage. There was now no thought that the discovery of a water-route from the Atlantic to the Pacific around the north of the American continent would yield any commercial results; but it was felt that geographical science and the honour of the British people demanded that the work of Samuel Hearne and Alexander Mackenzie should not remain uncompleted. It was known that, in the brief Arctic summer, ships could pene-

trate the Arctic Sea for great distances both from the Atlantic and from the Pacific, and all that remained was to bridge the intervening gap.

The man chosen to command the proposed expedition was perhaps the most famous British sailor and explorer then living. Sir John Franklin had been one of 'Nelson's men.' He had fought, as a midshipman, at Copenhagen and Trafalgar. In 1815 he had been wounded in the British attack on New Orleans. After the declaration of peace he had turned his attention to exploration in Northern Canada. In 1820-21 he had taken a party inland to the Athabaska district, and then struck north, by way of Great Slave Lake, to the mouth of the Coppermine River. From here, in two frail canoes, he and his men had attempted to link up the mouth of the Coppermine with the mouth of the Mackenzie—to bridge the gap between the farthest north of Hearne and the farthest north of Mackenzie. The expedition had been a failure, for supplies gave out, and the party was compelled to make a short-cut overland in the hope of reaching their base. Two of the party died of hunger; and one, who showed signs of cannibalism, had to be shot. The party was reduced, Franklin afterwards testified, 'to eating our old shoes and a few scraps of leather,' and only a lucky

encounter with some Indians saved them from starvation.

Even this gruesome experience, however, had not daunted Franklin's gallant spirit. In 1826 he renewed his attempt to link up the Mackenzie and the Coppermine. This time he descended the Mackenzie to the Arctic, and explored the Arctic coast both to the east and the west of the mouth of the Mackenzie. One of his parties, under his friend Dr. Richardson, actually reached the Coppermine, and mapped out this portion of the northern shores of Canada; while Franklin himself pushed west, along the northern coast of Alaska.

After these efforts Franklin had been for many years claimed by other duties. For a number of years he had been governor of Tasmania, in the Southern Hemisphere. During these years his work in the Arctic regions had been amplified and extended by others; but the actual discovery of the North-West Passage still remained a problem to be solved in the future, and when the British Admiralty decided in 1844 to make a final attempt to solve the problem, it was not surprising that they should have confided the task to the distinguished officer who, twenty years before, had done so much to make the solution of the problem possible.

Sir John Franklin was in 1844 a man of fifty-eight years of age, but he carried his

years as jauntily as a midshipman. He went about his preparations for the great adventure with the vigour and enthusiasm of a man half his age. The Admiralty gave him two ships, the *Erebus* and the *Terror*, which had been specially constructed for a voyage towards the South Pole, and which had actually penetrated farther into the southern ice-fields than any vessels up to that time. These were both stout, square-rigged sailing ships, fitted out with the latest improvements which the science of the period had been able to devise for Arctic navigation. A special apparatus had been installed between decks for heating and ventilation ; and in each vessel auxiliary engines and screws had been placed—the first attempt to utilise steam as a motive power in northern exploration. The holds were filled with vast quantities of stores, enough, it was said, for the sustenance of the crews for a period of three years ; and it was arranged, in addition, that a transport carrying further supplies should accompany the expedition as far as Greenland. The crews themselves were the pick of the Royal Navy and the merchant marine, all men after Franklin's own heart.

Franklin's instructions were to proceed by way of Greenland to Baffin Bay. From there he was to push westward into the Arctic Ocean along the parallel of 74° 15′ north latitude,

through the already familiar waters of Lancaster Sound and Barrow Strait, in the direction of the great body of water known as Melville Sound. From this line he was to endeavour to push south and to west toward the mouth of the Coppermine, whence it was known that a sea-passage existed to Bering Strait.

The *Erebus* and the *Terror*, with the transport detailed to accompany them on the first stage of their voyage, set sail from the Thames on June 19, 1845. They crossed to Greenland, and at the Whale Fish Islands, off the west coast of Greenland, they took on board the transport's supplies. The transport then returned to England, and the *Erebus* and the *Terror* sailed west across Baffin Bay to Lancaster Sound. Here they were sighted, on July 26, by a whaling ship, the *Prince of Wales*. Franklin sent over to the master of the whaling ship an invitation to dine with him on the following day. At that moment, however, a strong breeze sprang up, and a clear sea appeared ahead. Without delay, the *Erebus* and the *Terror* stood away toward the west, not even taking time to leave a message with the whaler.

They were never seen again by white men. The year 1846 came and passed. So did 1847, and yet no word of the explorers came out of the Arctic silence. As the year 1848 dawned, and winter advanced into summer, the gravest

fears began to be entertained. It was known that Franklin had taken with him supplies to last three years. The three years had come and gone. It was clear that somewhere amid the northern ice a fearful tragedy had been, or was being, enacted. Franklin and his gallant crews if alive at all, must be suffering the last tortures of starvation on some cruel and frozen shore of the Arctic archipelago.

The English people roused themselves to action. The Admiralty sent out relief expeditions both by way of Hudson Bay and by way of Bering Strait. Franklin's friends, Richardson, Ross, M'Clure, and many another, volunteered to try to find him. In the years that followed no fewer than fifty-two separate and distinct expeditions were organised, with the object of solving the mystery of Franklin's fate. In the course of the grim search, the whole of the Arctic coast of Canada was explored, and ships sailing west from the Atlantic met ships coming east from the Pacific—thus demonstrating the existence of a north-west passage, and incidentally defining the northernmost limits of the mainland of Canada. But of Franklin and his men for many years no trace was found.

It was not until 1854 that the first hint was obtained of what had happened. In the spring of that year, Dr. John Rae, a Hudson's Bay

man who had gone north to the Arctic by an overland route from the shores of Hudson Bay, fell in with some Eskimos who told him that, several years before, they had encountered a party of about forty white men on the island called King William's Land, hauling a boat and sledges over the ice. The Eskimos had gathered from these white men that they had had to abandon their ships, and that they were trying to make their way to where deer were to be found. They had bought some food from the Eskimos, and had seemed to be hungry. Later, the Eskimos had found the boat overturned, and under it and about it a number of dead bodies. They had picked up a variety of relics—guns, telescopes, compasses, forks, spoons, and so on—and some of these Dr. Rae had recovered. One of them was a small silver plate engraved 'Sir John Franklin, K.C.B.,' and another was a spoon bearing the crest and initials of Captain Crozier, Franklin's second-in-command.

There seemed a possibility, however, that some of the party were still alive, since the Eskimos had discovered near the upturned boat the feathers and fresh bones of geese—evidence that there were still live men in the party when the wild fowl came north in the spring. Lady Franklin, for one, refused to believe that all hope was lost, and with a brave and pathetic

resolution which defied despair decided to continue the search. In 1857 she devoted the last remnant of her fortune to fitting out a final expedition. Under Captain M'Clintock, a gallant sailor who, touched by Lady Franklin's grief and courage, gave his services free, the *Fox*, a small yacht, manned largely by volunteers, set out in a last attempt to trace the fate of the missing explorers.

Two years later the *Fox* returned with the first, and the last, direct word ever received from the *Erebus* and the *Terror*. In a cairn of stones found on King William's Island, Captain M'Clintock had discovered a document placed there by Franklin himself. It was dated May 28, 1847, two full years after Franklin had sailed from the Thames, and it read :

> 'H.M. Ships *Erebus* and *Terror* wintered in the ice lat. 70° 5′ N. long., 98° 23′ west, having wintered in 1845-46 at Beechey Island, after having ascended Wellington Channel to lat. 77° and returned by the west side of Cornwallis Island. Sir John Franklin commanding the expedition. All well.'

This showed that Franklin, having failed to find a passage to the south-west, had been caught in the ice-pack, and forced to spend there his second winter. It showed also, how-

ever, that supplies were in the spring of 1847 still holding out, and that Franklin was still hopeful of being able, when the ice-pack broke up, to sail south to the American coast.

But the document contained more than this original record. A year later, apparently, the cairn had been reopened, and there had been added, around the edge and on the back of the document, some notes which revealed the full horror of the tragedy that followed. The edges of the paper had been torn, but this much of the later record on the face of the document was legible :

> '. . . 848. H.M. Ships *Erebus* and *Terror* were deserted on the 22 of April, 5 leagues NNW. of this . . . been beset since 12th Sept. 1846. The officers and crews consisting of 105 souls under the command . . . tain F. R. M. Crozier landed here in Lat. 69° 37′ 42″ Long. 98° 41′.'

On the back of the paper was written in the same hand :

> 'Sir John Franklin died on the 11th June 1847 and the total loss by death to the expedition has been to date 9 officers and 14 men. F. R. M. Crozier, Captain and Senior Officer. James Fitzjames, Captain H.M.S. *Erebus*.'

And at one corner of the torn paper there stood

the words, all too significant of the fate of the survivors: '. . . and start to-morrow 26th for Back's Fish River.'

Captain M'Clintock, with this clue in his hands, traced out the last march of Franklin's men. At one place he found the skeleton of one of them, stretched out on the ground, his head pointing south. At another point he found a boat with two corpses in it, the one lying in the stern carefully covered over, the other lying in the bow, with two loaded muskets standing upright beside it. The Eskimos he met told him how the white men had abandoned their ships, and taken to the ice; how one ship had been crushed and sunk, and how the other had lain a wreck for years beside the coast of King William's Island; and how the white men, on their southward march, had perished. 'They fell down and died,' said an old Eskimo woman, 'as they walked away.'

The rest is silence. Over the details of the tragedy a kindly Providence has thrown an impenetrable veil; nor is it ever likely that the veil will now be lifted. But we know enough. We know that on the shores of the Arctic in 1848 over a hundred English sailors gave their lives that the world might know the truth; and we know that they met their martyrdom without leaving behind them a word of regret, or whimpering, or complaint.

EPILOGUE

THE discovery of Canada did not end with the search for Franklin. In a sense, it has not ended yet; for there are still vast spaces in the map of Canada 'where no man comes or hath come since the making of the world.' It has been only in recent years that the outlines of the geography of the Yukon and the Labrador peninsula have been laid bare; it was only in 1906 that the Norwegian explorer, Roald Amundsen, who later discovered the South Pole, succeeded in sailing through the Arctic Sea from the Atlantic to the Pacific; and even to-day new features of the geography of Canada are being revealed by explorers such as Mr. Vilhjalmur Stefansson and the members of the Canadian Geological Survey. The work of some of these latter-day explorers has been no less striking and thrilling than that of Champlain and Hudson and Radisson and La Vérendrye; there is, in truth, almost no end to the stories that might be woven out of the exploits of the Canadian

explorers. But, though the half has not been told, it is hoped that the stories set forth in the preceding pages will give some idea of the romance and adventure that have gone to the making of the map of Canada.

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